

# American Studies

## *Interdisciplinary*

## Requirements

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, and public presentation, along with 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 your major.

### **Requirements for the Major**

The major in American studies consists of 6 units:

- AMST 108 Introduction to American Studies (.5 unit)
- Four diversification courses (2 units)
- Six courses of elective study (3 units)
- The Senior Seminar (.5 unit)

**AMST 108 Introduction to American Studies (.5 unit).** This course is normally taken during the first or second year at Kenyon.

**Diversification courses (2 units).** See the list of courses below. One unit must be from A. History, and one unit from B. Politics, Culture, and Society. The American Studies program recommends .50 units from a group of courses listed in the Latino/a Studies Concentration. See [Latino/a Studies](#). Some courses may have prerequisites in the home department; others may have limited enrollment. Students majoring in American studies should work closely with their advisors to ensure their acceptance.

#### **A. History. Two courses (1 unit):**

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

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

#### **B. Politics, Culture, and Society. Two courses (1 unit) from the following:**

AMST 109 American Art and Culture, 1900-1945

AMST 200D /PSCI 200D Liberal Democracy in America

AMST 314 American College and University Architecture  
AMST 382 Baseball and American Culture  
ARHS 227D American Art to 1865  
ENGL 270 American Fiction  
ENGL 280 American Literary Modernism  
HIST 175 Early Black History  
HIST 176 Contemporary African-American History  
HIST 205/PSCI 309 U.S. Political History  
HIST 208 U.S. Women's History  
HIST 380 Black History through Fiction and Film  
HIST 388 Practice and Theory of History  
HIST 411 Civil Rights Era  
AMST 302D /MUSC 302D The History of Jazz  
PSCI 301 American Presidency  
RLST 230 Religion and Society in America (U.S.)  
RLST 332 African-American Religions  
AMST 229D/SOCY 229D Social Movements  
SOCY 246 American Folk Music

**Elective study (3 units).** 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, and America in a global context. Many other areas of focus are possible as well. The program now offers a "track" in Educational Studies as well. In addition, 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 one unit (2 courses) must be at the 300 or 400 level.

**Senior Seminar (.5 unit).** A one-semester seminar taken during the spring of the senior year. The Senior Seminar will typically entail individual research and public presentation.

### **The Senior Exercise**

The Senior Exercise in American studies may take several forms, but it must draw on the elective-study component of the major, identifying and then developing, through original research and creative presentation, a major theme that the student has identified as central to his or her work in American studies. By the final Friday in September, majors in American studies will present their plans for the Senior Exercise to their advisors and to the program director.

The exercise itself will have three parts: (1) a presentation (visual, oral, electronic) to the college public, including selected majors and faculty in American studies; (2) a ten-page written analysis, explanation,

and documentation of the work presented; and (3) an oral response to the audience following the presentation. The Senior Exercise will be presented no later than the last Friday in April in the spring semester.

## **Honors**

The Honors Program in American studies entails a two-semester (1 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 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 American studies for approval by April 1. Exceptions to the GPA requirements may occasionally be granted by petition.

## **The Concentration in American Studies**

The concentration in American studies, encompassing 3 units of work, consists of three components: a one-semester introductory course, AMST 108 (.5 unit); four semester courses in curricular options (2 units); and a one-semester senior seminar (.5 unit). 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 course requirements. Coursework undertaken for American studies must be over and above work required by a major department.

Students who are considering the concentration should consult with Peter Rutkoff, director of American studies, before enrolling in classes.

## **CROSS-LISTED COURSES**

The following course is cross-listed in the art history offerings and can satisfy the fine arts requirement: AMST 109 American Art and Culture, 1900-1945

## **Courses**

### **AMST 101D UNITED STATES HISTORY, 1492-1865**

*Credit: 0.5*

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with an introduction to United States history from the 15th century to the mid-19th century. Students will gain a more developed understanding of American history by examining the interactions between 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. Students will not only gain a general knowledge of this time period, but they will also 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. No prerequisite. Fulfills the history major and minor pre-modern requirement. This course is the same as HIST 101D, listed in the history curriculum.

Instructor: Bottiger

### **AMST 102D UNITED STATES HISTORY, 1865-PRESENT**

*Credit: 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 will also 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-twentieth-century conservative-politics movement and religious revival. No prerequisite. This course is the same as HIST 102D, in the history curriculum.

Instructor: Bottiger

### **AMST 108 INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN STUDIES**

*Credit: 0.5*

This course introduces students to the principles of American studies through the exploration of American history and culture in the 1960s. We will seek to understand the nature of American society in that critical period through the study of the struggle for political reform, the role of women, the civil rights movement, and the counter-culture. Guest lectures, films, and student presentations complement the course, and students will be asked to engage actively in its development. No prerequisite. Not open to seniors.

### **AMST 109 AMERICAN ART AND CULTURE, 1900-1945**

*Credit: 0.5*

This course will focus upon the visual culture of the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. Employing an American Studies interdisciplinary model, we shall look at visual imagery within a broad cultural context--in relationship to film, literature, history and politics. In so doing, we shall explore such questions as: What constitutes an American identity in the first half of the twentieth century? How does the notion of cultural nationalism help construct such identities? What are the points of intersection between European and American modernism and modernity? How does race impact modern American expression? Finally, what is the relationship between art, politics and social activism during these years?

This course is cross-listed in the Department of Art and Art History. No prerequisite. Open to first year students and sophomores.

Instructor: Dabakis

### **AMST 110 AUGUST WILSON AND BLACK PITTSBURGH**

*Credit: 0.5*

The great African American playwright August Wilson set his cycle of plays in Pittsburgh's once dynamic neighborhood, the Hill. This seminar will read a series of Wilson's plays, including "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," "The Piano Lesson," and "Fences," and locate them in time and place in African American history. This course is 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. Prerequisite: permission of instructor.

Instructor: Rutkoff

### **AMST 200D LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA**

*Credit: 0.5*

The course explores the guiding principles, major institutions, and national politics of the American political order. 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. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or permission of instructor. Offered every year. This course is the same as PSCI 220D, listed in the political science curriculum.

### **AMST 227D AMERICAN ART TO 1876**

*Credit: 0.5*

This course presents an overview of painting, sculpture, and architecture from colonial times to 1876. 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 eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Prerequisite: ARHS 111, AMST 108, AMST 109 or equivalent. This course is the same as ARHS 227D in the Art History Department curriculum.

### **AMST 302D THE HISTORY OF JAZZ**

*Credit: 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 investigate through a variety of sources the main jazz styles and musicians and their development and influence upon the jazz scene. Prerequisite: MUSC 101 or placement by exam. MUSC 102 is recommended but not required. Declared American studies majors may enroll in this course without the MUSC 101 prerequisite, but it is recommended. Offered every other year. This course is the same as MUSC 302D in the music curriculum.

### **AMST 303 AMERICAN VOICES: FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVES**

*Credit: 0.5*

We commonly don't remember that it is, after all, always the first person who is speaking, wrote Henry David Thoreau and indeed, the phenomenon of the first-person narrator is a distinctively American approach to both storytelling and history telling. The class will trace the origins of the essay from Montaigne, the French writer who popularized the essay, through a selection of American writers, including the transcendentalists, civil rights activists, feminists, humorists and environmentalists. In examining each essay, students will ask key questions regarding the interweaving of the historical and the personal. How does the narrator interact with, shape and transform the material presented in the essay? How does the author's personal experience open a window into the larger world? How do the essay's tools (form, scene, summary, musings) enable the author to explore truth differently from an historian? In addition to essay reading and analysis, class participants will be responsible for leading class discussions of essays. Participants will author several short personal essays and one extended essay that interweaves personal history with a larger historical and cultural context. The course will conclude with a public reading of original works. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

### **AMST 314 THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING**

*Credit: 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 are increasingly 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, its goals and philosophy, 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. Prerequisite: permission of instructor.

Instructor: Stamp

**AMST 330 SANKOFA PROJECT: THEORY AND PRACTICE OF URBAN EDUCATION**

*Credit: 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, charter. The seminar will meet weekly with students engaged during the week in Moodle discussions about issues raised in the reading. Students will also have a high school experience in Cleveland, with an introductory day during October break and a ten day residency in early January. Credit only for attending all components of the course. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. Limited enrollment. Junior standing.

Instructor: Rutkoff

**AMST 331 VISIONS OF AMERICA FROM ABROAD**

*Credit: 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, capitalism. The colonization of America by Europe led to our nation's status as a laboratory for political, social, and artistic theories which otherwise may never have been attempted. Although the USA is only a small part of the American continent, and there is a long and rich human history that predates Europe's awareness of it, the focus of a disproportionate amount of attention from Europe is on our relatively short history as a nation. From the very beginning of the process, however, Europeans have viewed us and our country with profound ambivalence. On the one hand, we are the territory upon which the dreams and aspirations of the boldest visionaries can develop. On the other hand, Europeans justifiably fear what can happen in a society which is so unencumbered by the authority exerted by previous generations. The fear of America as a Frankenstein nation without the soul of tradition has been the preoccupation of many of Europe's leading intellectuals over the last two hundred years. With every passing day, there are more and more others looking at us with ambivalence. As recent history has shown, America is not just a European obsession. Our ties to Europe have weakened in the last few decades, and we now find ourselves in a more multilateral geopolitical environment. The attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, was a brutal awakening for most Americans to the hostility that exists in many parts of the world, not only against our foreign policy but against our very identity as a people. Is such hostility related to the European ambivalence toward America, or is it a new phenomenon, with separate historical and intellectual roots? This course will be conducted as a seminar. Each week, we will examine texts and films that center on a particular theme of European-American intellectual relations, the emerging complicated relationship between Islam and America, and the longstanding tension with Latin America. While this course will teach us much about our American identity by looking at our society through the eyes of others, it will also teach us as much if not more about these others themselves. Among the texts of European writers included in the seminar are works by Alexis de Tocqueville, Jean Baudrillard, Simone de

Beauvoir, and Bernard-Henri Levy. The texts of Middle Eastern writers include works by Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Sayyid Qutb; among the Latin American authors are Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. We will also view and discuss several films by directors such as Wim Wenders, Aki Kaurismaki, Jean-Luc Godard, and Charlie Chaplin. No prerequisite. This course can count towards the major in French (modern languages or area studies) under certain conditions to be arranged with Prof. Guiney. Enrollment limited.

### **AMST 350 RELIGION IN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE**

*Credit: 0.5*

The relationship between religion and popular culture in America is multifaceted. It includes 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 and the celebration of religious emotions and the embrace of cultural expressions as forms of religious devotion. This course will explore all these facets of the relationship, looking at a cross-section of Hollywood films, television shows, music videos, various sub-genres of popular music, sports, new media, and cyber culture. Our study will be guided by the reading of academic texts on the topic, viewing of videos and images, and listening to samples of music from several genres. No prerequisite. Previous studies in American and/or religious studies will be a plus. Offered every other year.

Instructor: Edmonds

### **AMST 378D TOPICS IN AMERICAN ART**

*Credit: 0.5*

This advanced course will explore specific problems in American art and architecture. Topics include Rome in the American imagination, the Gilded Age, and monuments and memory. Assignments will include seminar reports, class discussion, and a research paper. Prerequisite: 0.5 unit of art history (ARHS 111, 227D) or American studies (AMST 108, 109) or equivalent. This course is the same as ARHS 378D, in the American studies curriculum.

### **AMST 381 SENIOR SEMINAR IN AMERICAN STUDIES**

*Credit: 0.5*

The course will provide a setting for guided student advanced work in American studies. The participants 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. Prerequisite: permission of instructor.

Instructor: Rutkoff



### **AMST 382 BASEBALL AND AMERICAN CULTURE**

*Credit: 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. Prerequisite: permission of instructor.

Instructor: Rutkoff

### **AMST 493 INDIVIDUAL STUDY**

*Credit: 0.5*

Normally, students who wish to pursue individual study in the American Studies Program should be aware of the following procedures:

1. 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 .5 unit of credit.
2. Students must have the prior approval of the program director in order to apply.
3. They must present a detailed reading list and syllabus, including a schedule of assignments/projects and due dates, to the faculty member with whom they choose to work.
4. The American Studies faculty member will confirm the syllabus and schedule in writing to the director of the program.
5. The student project must culminate in a public presentation
6. Evaluation is a combination of student self-evaluation and faculty evaluation, both of which will be reported to the program director with a recommendation for a final grade.

### **AMST 497Y SENIOR HONORS PROJECT**

*Credit: 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. Prerequisite: permission of American Studies department chair.

Instructor: Rutkoff

### **AMST 498Y SENIOR HONORS PROJECT**

*Credit: 0.5*

See the description for AMST 497Y.

Instructor: Rutkoff

**ADDITIONAL COURSES THAT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS CONCENTRATION:**

ARHS 227D: American Art to 1876  
ARHS 377: Topics in Modern Art  
ARTS 229: Documentary Photography  
ENGL 270: American Fiction  
ENGL 280: American Literary Modernism  
ENGL 283: Native American Literature  
ENGL 288: African-American Literature  
ENGL 372: The Gilded Age  
ENGL 378: Race in the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination  
ENGL 379Y: American Literature  
ENGL 380Y: American Literature  
ENGL 382: The Jazz Age  
ENGL 384: Imagining America in the Novel  
ENGL 385: Contemporary American Poetry  
ENGL 388: Studies in Twentieth-Century African American Literature  
ENGL 471: Hawthorne: Nation and Transnation in Hawthorne's Fiction  
ENGL 472: The Confidence Game in America  
ENGL 473: Faulkner  
ENGL 483: Contemporary Indigenous American Poetry  
ENGL 486: The Little Magazine in America  
ENVS 112: Introduction to Environmental Studies  
FILM 111: Introduction to Film  
FILM 267: The Documentary  
HIST 101D: United States History, 1492-1865  
HIST 102D: United States History, 1865-Present  
HIST 175: Early Black History  
HIST 176: Contemporary Black History  
HIST 205: U.S. Political History: The Great Depression and World War II  
HIST 208: U.S. Women's History  
HIST 209: History of North American Indians  
HIST 210: History of the South, 1607-Present  
HIST 275: World War II  
HIST 310: The Civil War  
HIST 312: Blacks in the Age of Jim Crow  
HIST 313: Black Intellectuals  
HIST 316: Jazz Age: 1900-1930  
HIST 317: Gilded Age America: 1877-1900  
HIST 356: Vietnam  
HIST 391: Special Topic

HIST 400: American Revolution  
HIST 411: The Civil Rights Era  
PSCI 200D: Liberal Democracy in America  
PSCI 301: The American Presidency  
PSCI 304: News Media and American Politics  
PSCI 309: American Political History  
PSCI 310: Public Policy  
PSCI 312: American Constitutional Law  
PSCI 332: African American Political Thought  
PSCI 461: U.S. Defense Strategy Seminar  
RLST 230: Religion and Society in America (U.S.)  
RLST 232: Afro-Caribbean Spirituality  
RLST 242: Afro-American Religions  
RLST 332: African-American Religions  
SOCY 104: Identity in American Society  
SOCY 229D: Social Movements  
SOCY 231: Issues of Gender and Power  
SOCY 232: Sexual Harassment: Normative Expectations and Legal Questions  
SOCY 244: Race, Ethnicity, and American Law  
SOCY 246: American Folk Music  
SOCY 250: Systems of Stratification  
SOCY 422: Topics in Social Stratification  
SOCY 440: Blackface: The American Minstrel Show  
SOCY 463: Intersectional Theory  
SPAN 380: Introduction to Chicana/o Cultural Studies