

# AMERICAN STUDIES, M.A.

Saint Louis University's Master of Arts in American Studies gives students a solid grounding in the origins, development, practices and theoretical framework of the field, as well as aiding them in the pursuit of independent research and academic writing.

SLU's award-winning American studies faculty are trained specifically in the discipline. Most have earned a Ph.D. in American studies; all have worked extensively in the field as scholars and teachers. Our time and efforts as teaching faculty are focused on American studies students. At the same time, we enjoy productive and cordial relations with our colleagues in other departments who teach and conduct research in related fields, and students may take carefully selected courses in those departments, as students in other departments do in American studies.

Our faculty has particular strengths in cultural studies; the study of cities, regions, and place; American religion; American musics; American education; and the study of U.S. empire. Right now, faculty research interests are in girlhood, Catholicism, and the carceral state; experiences and constructions of mixed-race identities; St. Louis's civil rights history; literature and regional identity; environmental humanities and Indigenous studies; and late 20th-century popular culture.

Graduate Handbook (<https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/american-studies/-pdf/american-studies-department-grad-handbook.pdf>)

## Careers

SLU's M.A. in American studies is a stand-alone degree that is useful for work in arts and cultural institutions, libraries, museums, historical societies, public humanities, nonprofit agencies and other venues. Some students may also pursue an M.A. in American studies as a prelude to further degrees, such as a professional M.A. or doctorate.

## Admission Requirements

An undergraduate degree or equivalent in a humanities or social science area is required; additional prerequisite work may be required at the discretion of the department.

### Application Requirements

- Application form (no fee required)
- Transcript(s)
- Three letters of recommendation
- Résumé or cv
- Goal statement of 500-1000 words
- Writing sample of 3,500 to 7,500 words
- Interview (required only of finalists, scheduled in January)

All written materials are due by Dec. 15 for Fall admission of the next year. Applicants interested in funding are very strongly encouraged to apply for SLU's Diversity and/or Presidential Fellowships. For more information and to apply go to: <https://www.slu.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-scholarships-fellowships-assistantships-awards.php>

### Requirements for International Students

All Saint Louis University admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students. International students applying to SLU must also meet the following additional requirements:

- Demonstrate English language proficiency (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/english-language-proficiency/>)
- Academic records must include an English translation. Unofficial copies may be accepted in some cases for initial admission review, however official copies must be received prior to enrollment. Course-by-course transcript evaluations are accepted and are required in some cases.

Students must submit financial documents to be issued an I-20 for their F-1 visa application. Proof of financial support must include:

- A letter of financial support from the person(s) or sponsoring agency funding the student's time at Saint Louis University
- A letter from the sponsor's bank verifying that the funds are available and will be so for the duration of the student's study at the University

## Assistantship Application Deadline

All students who indicate a need for financial assistance and submit their complete application by Dec. 15 will be considered for financial support with admission.

## American Studies Application Review Process

A faculty committee reviews all applications. Qualifying applicants will be contacted for a video interview. Follow the department link above for more information about our graduate program, funding and activities.

## Tuition

Tuition	Cost Per Credit
Graduate Tuition	\$1,450

Additional charges may apply. Other resources are listed below:

Information on Tuition and Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition/>)

Miscellaneous Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/fees/>)

Information on Summer Tuition (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition-summer-current/>)

## Scholarships, Assistantships and Financial Aid

For priority consideration for a graduate assistantship, apply by the program admission deadlines listed. Fellowships and assistantships provide a stipend and may include health insurance and a tuition scholarship for the duration of the award.

Explore Scholarships and Financial Aid Options (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/types-of-aid/>)

## Learning Outcomes

1. Students will explain the contexts — such as historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social or intellectual — that shape American cultural practices, expressions and ideas.
2. Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of power, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation or ability.

- Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions or ideas.
- Students will effectively articulate arguments and information for an American studies audience.
- Students will identify how their research extends, diverges from, or speaks to prior American studies scholarship.

## Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required Courses</b>		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies	3
<b>Elective Courses</b>		
Select seven graduate elective courses, for example:		21
ASTD 5010	African American Politics, Culture & Identity	
ASTD 5020	Frontiers & Borderlands: Contact & Conquest in the American Imagination	
ASTD 5440	Cultures of American Religion	
ASTD 5550	Visualizing Race	
ASTD 5700	Metropolitan America	
ASTD 5900	Practice of American Studies	
ASTD 5910	Graduate Internship in American Studies	
ASTD 6015	Many Midwests: Race and Citizenship in the Heartland	
ASTD 6020	American Political Thought	
ASTD 6200	Visual Culture Theory	
ASTD 6250	The Cultural Studies Movement: Origins and Contemporary Practice	
ASTD 6350	Native American and Indigenous Studies	
ASTD 6400	Transnational America	
ASTD 6500	Visions of U.S. Empire	
ASTD 6700	Cold War Cultural Politics and the "American Century"	
ASTD 6800	American Food & Culture	
<b>Options</b>		
Select one of the following Options:		6
<i>Thesis Option</i>		
ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	
<i>Portfolio Option</i>		
Choose two additional courses from list of electives.		
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

## Non-Course Requirements

### Portfolio or Thesis

Students will pursue one of two capstone tracks: a portfolio paper or a thesis.

A portfolio paper is a 20 to 30 page article or literature review, typically a revised and expanded seminar paper meant to demonstrate the student's extensive knowledge of their field. It is developed in conjunction with a two-person faculty committee (a chair and one additional reader) over the summer following the first year of the M.A. program and during the second year of the M.A. program.

A thesis is a more developed project with an original argument, typically 60 to 80 pages in length, based in extensive primary and secondary

research. It is developed in conjunction with a three-person faculty committee (a chair and two additional readers) over the summer following the first year of the M.A. program and during the second year of the M.A. program.

### Oral Examination

After the student's committee has approved the final version of the portfolio paper or thesis, there will be an oral examination before three faculty members. For the portfolio paper, this will be the two-person portfolio committee plus an additional faculty member. For the thesis, this will be the three-person thesis committee.

### Continuation Standards

Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in all graduate/professional courses.

## Roadmap

This roadmap is just one example of a semester-by-semester plan of study for this program. There are other plans students can and do take. The plan of study for each particular student is established in consultation with each student's academic advisor; *this roadmap does not replace academic advising appointments.*

*Roadmap notes:*

- This Roadmap assumes full-time enrollment unless otherwise noted.
- Courses/Milestones marked with an "!" are critical and must be completed in the semester listed in the Roadmap to ensure a timely graduation.
- Course availability and sequencing are subject to change.

## Thesis Option

Course	Title	Credits
<b>Year One</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies (Required)	3
2 additional American Studies grad seminars <sup>1</sup>		6
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
3 American Studies grad seminars		9
Identify a thesis advisor and project		
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Year Two</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	3
1 American Studies grad seminar		3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	3
1 American Studies grad seminar		3
Complete Checklist for MA graduation		
Complete MA Thesis and Defense		
<b>Credits</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

<sup>1</sup> Up to two courses outside of the department may be substituted for ASTD seminars, with the approval of the advisor. MA Thesis students should take 15-18 credits in their first year, and an additional 12-15 (for a total of 30) in their second year. Six credits in their second year must be ASTD 5990 Thesis Research (0-6 cr).

## Portfolio Option

Course	Title	Credits
<b>Year One</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies (Required)	3
2 additional American Studies grad seminars <sup>1</sup>		6
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
3 American Studies grad seminars		9
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Year Two</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
2 American Studies grad seminars		6
Identify an MA advisor and project		
<b>Credits</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
2 additional American Studies grad seminars		6
Complete Checklist for MA graduation		
Complete MA Portfolio Paper and Defense		
<b>Credits</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

<sup>1</sup> Up to two courses outside of the department may be substituted for ASTD seminars, with the approval of the advisor and Grad Coordinator. MA Portfolio students should take 15-18 credits in their first year, and an additional 12-15 (for a total of 30) in their second year.

## Contact Us

For additional information regarding admissions and graduate programs in American studies, please email [american.studies@slu.edu](mailto:american.studies@slu.edu) or call 314-977-2911 and ask to be directed to the graduate coordinator.