American Studies

The concentration in American Studies seeks to understand American society and cultures as emerging from historical and contemporary processes at work in local, national, and global contexts. Concentrators study four broad themes: social structure and the practices of identity, space and place, production and consumption of culture, and science, technology, and everyday life. The concentration is predicated on the ideal of scholarly engagement with the public, so students take junior seminars that engage some aspect of the public humanities such as public policy, memorialization, community studies or civic engagement. Study abroad is supported and encouraged.

Interested students may contact Professor Haviland (beverly_haviland@brown.edu?subject=American Studies concentration), the director of undergraduate studies.

A concentrator in American Studies will be able to:
- Analyze texts, contexts, and data from multiple disciplinary and historical perspectives
- Synthesize research as verbal, visual and/or digital presentations
- Explore the theory and/or practice of the engagement of scholarship with a broader public
- Understand how American society and cultures have been and are being shaped by global flows of people, goods and ideas
- Experiment with new media as critical tools for scholarship

Concentrators have gone on to a vast variety of careers, including law, public humanities, politics, public service, academics, business, creative arts, and medicine.

Requirements:
- Each concentrator will take 10 upper-level courses, four of which must be seminars, including a Junior Seminar and a Senior Seminar. In addition, students who wish to graduate with honors are required to take two semesters of AMST 1700 for a total of 12 credits.
- Each concentrator will create an individual FOCUS consisting of at least three courses in consultation with the Concentration Advisor. The focus is the flexible core of the concentration. Here each student builds a coherent and dynamic interdisciplinary structure of related courses that develops his or her compelling interest in some aspect of American experience. All seniors in the class of 2013 forward will be required to do a capstone electronic portfolio.
- Some concentrators may elect to do an Honors Thesis and are encouraged to take AMST 1800, the Honors Seminar, in the Spring of their Junior year. Students pursuing honors are required to take two independent study courses in their senior year, in addition to the regular concentration requirements, in order to write their honors thesis.

Requirements for the American Studies Concentration

Junior Seminar: A course from the AMST 1700 Series, for example:
- AMST 1700B Death and Dying in America
- AMST 1700C Slavery in American History, Culture and Memory
- AMST 1700D Race and Remembering
- AMST 1700F American Publics
- AMST 1700I Community Engagement with Health and the Environment

Senior Seminar: A course from the AMST 1900 series taken during the senior year, for example:
- AMST 1900A The Problem of Class in America
- AMST 1900B America and the Asian Pacific: A Cultural History
- AMST 1900C Narratives of Slavery
- AMST 1900D America as a Trans-Pacific Culture

Two additional upper-level seminars taken from the AMST 1700, AMST 1800, or AMST 1900 series

Six upper-level lectures or seminars numbered between AMST 1000 and AMST 1900, including those AMST 1900s listed above

AMST 1250G Topics in Material Culture Studies: The Arts and Crafts Movement in America 1880-1920
AMST 1596 Education Beyond the Classroom Walls: Teaching and Learning in Cultural Institutions
AMST 1600D Sports in American Society
AMST 1601 Health and Healing in American History
AMST 1611M Trauma and the Shame of the Unthinkable: The Holocaust, American Slavery, and Childhood Sexual Abuse
AMST 1901D Motherhood in Black and White
AMST 1902Z Radio: From Hams to Podcasts
AMST 1904V Decolonizing Minds: A People's History of the World
AMST 1905N War and the Mind in Modern America
AMST 1905Q Laboring Women: Work, Reproduction, and Leisure since Reconstruction
AMST 1906H Beauty Pageants in American Society
AMST 1906I Decolonizing Museums: Collecting Indigenous Culture in Taiwan and North America

Ungraded Capstone ePortfolio

Total Credits 10

Additional criteria concerning the FOCUS:
- Three of the ten (10) required upper-level courses must fit into the FOCUS
- Up to four (4) courses from other departments can be counted toward the concentration IF and ONLY IF they fit into the FOCUS
Honors

AMST 1970 Independent Reading and Research
(Students pursuing honors in the concentration are required to take two semesters of Independent Study to produce the Honors Thesis)

WHAT we study

American Studies at Brown is concerned with four broad themes:

• **Social Structures and the Practices of Identity:** How do communities and individuals come to define themselves, and how do others define them, in terms of, among other categories, nation, region, class, race, ethnicity, gender, sex, religion, age and sexuality? How do organizations and institutions function socially and culturally? What are the roles of social movements, economic structures, politics and government?

• **Space and Place:** How is space organized, and how do people make place? This includes the study of natural and built environments; local, regional, national and transnational communities; and international and inter-regional flows of people, goods, and ideas.

• **Production and Consumption of Culture:** How do people represent their experiences and ideas as culture? How is culture transmitted, appropriated and consumed? What is the role of artists and the expressive arts, including literature, visual arts and performance?

• **Science, Technology, and Everyday Life:** How does work and the deployment of science and technology shape American culture? How do everyday social practices of work, leisure and consumption provide agency for people?

HOW we study

American Studies at Brown emphasizes four intersecting approaches that are critical tools for understanding these themes:

• **Cultural and Social Analysis:** Reading and analyzing different kinds of texts, including literary, visual, aural, oral, material objects and landscapes. Examining ethnic and racial groups, institutions, organizations and social movements.

• **Global/International Contextualization:** Comprehending the United States as a society and culture that has been shaped by the historical and contemporary flows of people, goods and ideas from around the world and in turn, learning about the various ways in which America has shaped the world.

• **New Media Understandings:** Understanding the creation of new forms of discourse, new ways of knowing and new modes of social organization made possible by succeeding media revolutions. Using new media as a critical tool for scholarship.

• **Publicly Engaged Scholarship:** Connecting the theory and the practice of publicly-engaged research, understanding and presentation, from community-based scholarship to ethnography, oral history, and museum exhibits. Civic engagement might include structured and reflective participation in a local community or communities or the application of general theoretical knowledge to understanding social issues.
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Helvetica was used instead of Arial.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.