

# 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 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:

The concentration requires 10 classes. A maximum of 2 courses may be counted toward multiple concentrations.

Each concentrator must take at least 8 upper-level courses including a Junior Seminar (an AMST 1700 level course) and a Senior Seminar (AMST 1900 level course). Students may take as many AMST 1900 level courses as they wish, however, for the course to count as a senior seminar it must be taken during the senior year.

Students may count up to two lower-level classes (below 1000-level).

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 cluster of related courses that develops his or her compelling interest in some aspect of American experience. Up to three courses from outside of AMST and ETHN can be counted for credit within the concentration if they relate to the concentrator's focus area.

Of the 10 required classes, four must be seminars, and two must be classes offered under the AMST or ETHN prefixes that have been tagged with a specific method. Each class must be tagged with a different method. These seminars and tagged classes can count for any other concentration requirement.

All seniors are required to do a capstone electronic portfolio.

Students who hope to pursue Honors are encouraged to take AMST 1800 (<https://bulletin.brown.edu/search/?P=AMST%201800>), the Honors Seminar, in the Spring of their Junior year, in preparation for submitting an Honors thesis proposal. Admission to Honors candidacy requires an academic record providing evidence of the student's ability to do Honors work. At least half of the student's grades in courses counted toward the concentration must be grades of A or "S with Distinction", and Honors proposals must include a recommendation form completed by a faculty member who has taught a class requiring a significant research paper. Students pursuing Honors are required to take two independent study courses (AMST 1970 (<https://bulletin.brown.edu/search/?P=AMST%201970>)) in their senior year, in addition to the regular concentration requirements (for a total of 12 credits), in order to write their Honors thesis. Guidelines for completion and submission of the thesis are on the department website

## Requirements for the American Studies Concentration

Junior Seminar: A course from the AMST 1700 Series, for example:		1
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:		1
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	
AMST 1900F	Transnational Popular Culture	
AMST 1900G	Movements, Morals, and Markets	
AMST 1900I	Latina/o Cultural Theory	
AMST 1900J	Race, Immigration and Citizenship	
AMST 1900K	China in the American Imagination	
AMST 1900L	Cold War Culture The American Culture in the Cold War	
AMST 1900N	Ethnicity, Identity and Culture in 20th Century New York City	
AMST 1900O	Filipino American Cultures	
AMST 1900P	Essaying Culture	
AMST 1900Q	From Perry to Pokemon: Japan in the United States, the United States in Japan	
AMST 1900R	Gender, Race, and Class in the United States	
AMST 1900S	Green Cities: Parks and Designed Landscapes in Urban America	
AMST 1900U	Immigrant Radicals: Asian Political Movements in the Americas 1850-1970	
AMST 1900V	Immigrants, Exiles, Refugees, and Citizens in the Americas	
AMST 1900W	Latina Literature: The Shifting Boundaries of Identity	
AMST 1900X	Latina/o Religions: Encounters of Contestations and Transformations	
AMST 1900Y	Latino New York	
AMST 1900Z	Latinos and Film	
Two additional upper-level seminars taken from the AMST 1700, AMST 1800, or AMST 1900 series		2
Four upper-level lectures or seminars numbered between AMST 1000 and AMST 1900, including those AMST 1900s listed above. Some examples of past seminars include:		4
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 Unspeakable: 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	
Two additional courses under the AMST or ETHN prefix		2
Ungraded Capstone ePortfolio		
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>10</b>

## 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.