

American Studies (PhD)

The University has one of the oldest and most highly regarded programs in American studies, which focuses on the cultural, social, and intellectual life of the United States, as well as the place of the United States and US citizens in the world. Students in the department analyze the American past and present from the perspectives of several disciplines, learn to synthesize their knowledge, and acquire the habits of mind needed for cultural analysis.

The program offers courses in areas such as American intellectual, cultural, and artistic life; race, ethnicity, and gender; cultural geography and material culture; and the public arts and popular culture. Specific courses are offered on topics such as immigration, transnationalism, and diaspora; American political theory; property, race, and critical legal studies; religion and psychology; childhood studies; food and foodways; animals; technology and design; social movements and radical political cultures; feminism, fashion, and beauty; the experiences of Latin American and Caribbean descendants in the United States; space and place; and public memory. The program also invites students to take advantage of the resources of the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, the Center for Asian American Studies, the Center for Mexican American Studies, the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies, the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and the Américo Paredes Center for Cultural Studies. American studies courses are sometimes cross-listed with other courses throughout the University; in addition to the department's core faculty, students may work with faculty members from departments such as anthropology, art and art history, English, geography and the environment, government, history, radio-television-film, religious studies, and from architecture, law, and education.

The courses that American studies students take outside the program train them in areas of expertise relevant to their central interests. With the approval of the graduate advisor in American studies, these courses may be in any of the liberal arts or in architecture, business, communication, education, fine arts, law, the sciences, or public affairs.

The average time to degree is six years of full-time enrollment, including research and dissertation.

Graduate Handbook

Graduate handbook information is updated and maintained by each program. Graduate handbooks are available within each program's office and [online](#). Please contact the program with concerns or questions.

Total Hours Required: 96 (minimum)

Average total hours for program: 108-123

Requirements

To obtain the doctoral degree, a student must

- demonstrate reading competence in a foreign language,
- pass the American studies oral qualifying examination,
- prepare and defend a dissertation prospectus, which is intended to be an exploratory document and should be no longer than 20 pages, and
- write and defend a dissertation that is an original contribution to knowledge about American culture and that involves interdisciplinary research.

Students entering the PhD program, who did not complete their MA within the program, are required to complete:

- six hours cultural history (AMS 385 and AMS 386);
- three hours required methodology (AMS 393);
- three hours research (AMS 390); and
- six hours electives (non conference courses), which may be within American studies or from outside departments.
- Additional hours may be required by the graduate advisor.
- The required coursework should be completed within the student's first year in the program.

While preparing for the oral examination, doctoral students will take independent reading courses (AMS 392) under the direction of faculty members and with consultation from the graduate advisor. Through such coursework, the student will master three fields of concentration—American studies, a field of interest, and a dissertation field. These are the three fields of concentration on which the student is questioned in the oral qualifying exam. While preparing for the qualifying examination, students will be advised by the graduate advisor if additional coursework is needed.

For students completing the Masters of Art degree in American studies at The University of Texas at Austin, the qualifying examination should be taken during the spring semester of the student's third year in the program. Following the qualifying examination, the student is expected to convene a dissertation prospectus meeting during the fall semester of the fourth year in the program. For students entering the doctoral program with a qualifying master's degree from an outside program, the qualifying examination should be taken in the spring semester of the student's second year in the program. Following the qualifying examination, the student is expected to convene a dissertation prospectus meeting during the fall of the third year in the program.

Code	Title	Hours
All students in this program must also follow these requirements and policies:		
Graduate Liberal Arts Requirements		
Graduate University Requirements		