

AMERICAN STUDIES, MA

The Master of Arts program in American Studies is designed to enable students to examine American culture from a broad, interdisciplinary perspective, combining basic cultural studies with advanced professional training. Drawing on the graduate resources of the University at large, students develop individually tailored programs of coursework that reflect their own interests.

Our graduates have used the MA in American Studies as preparation for positions in journalism, public relations, library service, historical preservation, community organizing, private foundation work, law, and education, among other fields.

Admissions

A student interested in pursuing a master's degree in American Studies must first apply for admission to the Graduate School and satisfy the school's minimum requirements as stated in the catalog. Scores from the Graduate Record Examination are not required for the application.

Applications must include a statement of purpose that explains the specific academic interest in the program. The applicant should outline their expected outcomes after earning a master's degree in American Studies such as goals for employment or for further academic study. Applicants must also address one or more explicit aspects of American culture that they would like to pursue (for example: media representations of Americans abroad; race or gender roles in Broadway theater; the music of political protest movements). Applicants may also want to specify department faculty with whom they would like to work. A basic undergraduate background in American culture (literature, history, and political thought) is preferred, but is not a prerequisite for admission to the program.

The application must include a writing sample (approximately 15 pages) and letters of recommendation from evaluators who can speak to the candidates' academic potential, especially regarding research experience, understanding of theoretical concepts, classroom participation, and the overall quality of work performed.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

Curricular Requirements

Candidates for the master's degree must earn a minimum of 30 semester hours of coursework credit and pass the comprehensive examination or complete a culminating or "capstone experience" as described under the Comprehensive Examinations section below.

Students must also create and complete a year-long research project of their own design (under AMS 595 and AMS 596) that usually culminates in a major analytical paper.

Code and Title	Hours
Required Courses	
AMS 592 American Topic Seminar	6
AMS 585 American Experience to 1865	3
AMS 595 Ams Colloquium: Res & Methods	3
AMS 596 Ams Colloquium: Scholarly Writ	3
Elective Courses	15
Electives selected with Advisor Approval	
AMS 500 Internship	
AMS 505 Directed Study	
AMS 506 Directed Study	

AMS 507	Landscapes of the South
AMS 512	On The Road
AMS 516	American Environmental Thought
AMS 521	Writer & Artist in America
AMS 522	Popular Culture in America
AMS 523	The Roots of American Music
AMS 529	American between the Wars
AMS 530	Special Topics
AMS 531	Studies In Pop Culture
AMS 532	Studies In The Arts
AMS 536	Studies Social Experience
AMS 539	Urban Spaces
AMS 545	The "Good War"
AMS 565	Fictions of American Identity
AMS 589	Approaches Teaching AMS
Comprehensive Exam	

Total Hours 30

A student may take up to 9 hours outside the department, choosing a single disciplinary or cognate area (literature, history, broadcast and film, women's studies, journalism, the South, etc.) or two minor areas. Most students, however, choose a focus within American Studies.

Transfer Credit

Please refer to the Graduate School link on transfer credit.

Accelerated Master's Program

The Accelerated Master's Program is intended for gifted and highly motivated candidates for bachelor's degrees at The University of Alabama whose objectives include a degree in American Studies at the master's level. Qualified students apply to begin graduate study in their senior year. Undergraduates taking graduate level courses are expected to meet the same academic standards as the graduate students in the course. Although AMP students will typically complete the requirements for the bachelor's degree prior to the graduate degree, such a program may lead to simultaneous completion of requirements for both graduate and bachelor's degrees. A student may enroll in only one AMP program.

AMP students are classified as undergraduates until they complete the requirements for their undergraduate degrees, and therefore may not hold graduate assistantships until their classifications are changed to graduate status. At that time, AMP students will also become eligible for graduate fellowships and scholarships.

Applicants to the Accelerated Master's Program (AMP) in American Studies are not required to submit an admission test score.

Please refer to the Graduate School link on accelerated masters programs.

Comprehensive Examination/Capstone

Each candidate for the Master of Arts degree in American Studies will write a comprehensive examination designed to reflect the individual's program. The comprehensive examination is intended as an integrating, synthesizing experience that enables the student to draw together the various component areas of his or her course of study. The results of the examination should attest to the student's acquisition of an

interdisciplinary perspective, as well as an understanding of American culture as a whole. The grading of exams is as follows: Distinction, High Pass, Pass, and Fail.

Internship Requirements

An internship opportunity combines independent study and practical field work focusing on a particular problem or topic related to American culture and experience. Recent examples include internships in museum management, historic preservation, archaeological research, television production, category fiction, promoting academic programs, documentary television, academic public relations, with Alabama Heritage and Louisville magazines, and with the Paul Bryant Museum.

A student must have the approval of an American Studies faculty supervisor as well as from the onsite supervisor, who will outline the duties and outcomes of the internship. After the completion of the internship, a final report must be submitted to the faculty supervisor.

AMS 500 may be taken for 1-3 credit hours.

Plan I - Thesis Process Requirements

The master's degree program in American Studies does not require the completion of a thesis.

Plan II - Non-Thesis Process Requirements

The non-thesis process requirements are outlined in the Curricular Requirements. These encompass the completion of 30 total credit hours, which include 6 hrs. of seminars (AMS 592), 6 hrs. of a two-semester sequence of the research colloquium (AMS 595 and 596), and a comprehensive examination.

Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

Please refer to the Graduate School link on degree requirements.

Student Progress Requirements

Students must meet with the Director of Graduate Studies each semester for registration and to check on their academic progress.

Academic Misconduct Information

Please refer to the Graduate School link on academic misconduct.

Withdrawals and Leaves of Absence Information

Please refer to the Graduate School link on withdrawals and leaves of absence.

Academic Grievance Information

Please refer to the Graduate School link on academic grievance procedures.

Grades and Academic Standing

Please refer to the Graduate School link on grades and academic standing.

Graduate School Deadlines Information

Please refer to the Graduate School link on deadlines.

Application for Graduation Information

Please refer to the Graduate School link on applying for graduation.

Acquiring Assistantship Funding

The Department offers graduate teaching assistantships to qualified applicants. Financial support is usually guaranteed for the two years of the master's program for students who maintain good academic standing and continual enrollment in the program.

Fellowship Nominations

Exceptional applicants may be nominated by the Department's Director of Graduate Studies and the AMS Graduate Admissions Committee for UA fellowships. Fellowship recipients are guaranteed paid tuition and fees, a stipend, and benefits at least commensurate with those provided through GTA support.

Performance Expectations for Students Receiving Financial Support

Students receiving financial support must remain in good academic standing in the American Studies MA program. Graduate teaching assistants must adequately perform all duties assigned to them in a timely manner as defined by the instructor of record or their designee for all courses to which the student is assigned teaching, grading, and/or other preparative responsibilities.

Conditions for Termination of Financial Support

Dereliction of duty. Dereliction of duty includes but is not limited to: failure to comply with all UA safety and interpersonal conduct policies; absence from scheduled obligations without prior notification to the instructor of record, or failure to satisfactorily complete all activities associated with the funded position as defined by the instructor of record or their designee and the student's departmental memorandum of appointment.

Loss of good academic standing. Students not in good academic standing have one probationary academic semester after notification of their change in academic status to return to good academic standing. Financial support will be terminated if good academic standing is not restored by the end of the probationary academic semester. Students who earn more than two grades of 'C' or at least one grade of 'D' or 'F' in graduate courses will have a compulsory academic performance review by the Director of Graduate Studies. This review will determine whether the student should continue to receive financial support and/or be dismissed from the program at the end of the semester in which the non-passing grade is earned or at the end of the following semester. A decision will be rendered prior to the end of the semester in which a third 'C' and/or a 'D' or 'F' grade is reported.

Resolved finding of Academic Misconduct. Penalties, including potential loss of financial support, will be determined with guidance from the UA Graduate School and/or the UA College of Arts and Sciences.