

Master of Arts in American Studies

American Studies is an interdisciplinary program offering graduate work on society and culture in the United States--past, present, and in global context. It accommodates a variety of individual academic objectives. All students are asked to define an area focus--a period or problem--and to draw on appropriate university resources relating to that area. Students must demonstrate coherence in their graduate work and be able to show relationships between their work and the wider socio cultural system. To accomplish this, students must develop knowledge (including historical perspective) in the humanities and social sciences.

The Master of Arts in American Studies is a free-standing degree. Students admitted to the M.A. program may hold bachelor's degrees in any field and will be considered for admission based on the merit of their application. Students nearing completion of the M.A. program may apply to the Ph.D. program through an in-department application process.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Admission to the M.A. in American Studies

Eligibility criteria for admission to the Ph.D. program follow Graduate Studies' admission policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>).

Priority application deadline for funding consideration: January 5 for fall admission

Final application deadline: May 1 for fall admission

If January 5 or May 1 fall on a weekend, the deadline will be the following business day.

The admissions process is rigorous and requires a competitive application to be successful. A complete application must include:

- A completed application form and non-refundable application fee submitted online to Graduate Studies (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>).
- A copy or scan of official transcripts (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/#section366>) from each college and post-secondary institution you have attended.

- A statement of academic objectives describing your intellectual development, previous academic training, and areas of academic interest. The statement of academic objectives should make it clear why the student is pursuing graduate study in American Studies, and what kind of work they hope to prepare for through a rigorous, interdisciplinary program. The most effective statements often identify an existing intellectual conversation or problem to which the student wishes to contribute, and at least one faculty member with whom they may potentially work. The statement need not describe a developed research project, but ought to give a good idea of the kinds of questions, topics, and priorities that the student will pursue in building a research agenda. The quality of this statement is an especially important factor in the decisions of our admissions committee.
- A current résumé or curriculum vitae (C.V) summarizing your academic background and relevant work experience.
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with your academic abilities, potential, and preparation for graduate study (submitted via the recommendation section of the online application).
- A sample of your written academic work. This should be a research paper or article of no more than 35 pages that represents your best work to date. Students who have completed a thesis may submit the introduction.

M.A. Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Core Courses		
AMS 801	Introduction to American Studies (offered every fall)	3
AMS 802	Theorizing America (offered every fall)	3
AMS 803	Research Methods in American Studies (offered every spring)	3
AMS 804	Research Seminar (offered every fall)	3
M.A. Plan of Study		12
4 courses, selected in consultation with the faculty advisor based on the student's research and professional interests, constitute a coherent program of study, including historical depth in a defined area that prepares the student for the M.A. portfolio. Courses may be AMS or non-AMS courses, and at least 1 must be a methods course. At least 50% of the student's coursework must be taken at the 700 level or above.		
Portfolio Hours		6
After completing the required courses, the student enrolls in AMS 898 with their faculty advisor to prepare the M.A. portfolio.		
Total Hours		30

M.A. Portfolio and Oral Examination

Students prepare and submit to their M.A. exam committee a portfolio, which includes a research article of publishable quality, research and teaching statements, and a reflection on the graduate experience to date. The article is an original piece of research, and it should be written and formatted for submission to a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal relevant to the topic and approach of the research. The article does not have to be accepted for publication as a requirement of graduation.

The student must complete an oral defense of their portfolio. A majority of the committee members must approve the defense with an assessment of Pass or Pass with Honors in order for the requirement to be met.

HANDBOOK

Further details can be found in the American Studies Graduate Student Handbook (<https://americanstudies.ku.edu/graduate-student-handbook/>). Students are also encouraged to review Graduate Studies' policies (<https://ogs.ku.edu/policies/>) related to master's programs for information about other requirements that may apply.

Transition TO THE p.H.D. Program

Students admitted to the M.A. program in American Studies at KU must petition the Department if they wish to continue for the Ph.D. after passing the M.A. oral examination. This requires an internal application process, including the submission of a research statement and letter of support from a KU American Studies faculty member. All admissions to the Ph.D. program are at the discretion of the American Studies Graduate Committee.

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Critically apply theories, methodologies, and knowledge to address fundamental questions in primary area of study.
- Participate in an interdisciplinary scholarly community.
- Follow ethical guidelines for work in the discipline.
- Become effective teachers. The successful student will understand how to design learning experiences to maximize student learning and how to connect course design explicitly to desired outcomes. The student will develop a sense of teaching purpose informed by transformative pedagogies that problematize social reality and knowledge.
- Produce a valuable contribution to the field.