Doctor of Philosophy in American Studies

The Ph.D. is the terminal degree in American Studies. In the Ph.D. program, we seek to educate, mentor, and place scholars who will make innovative contributions to American Studies and related fields, both inside and outside of the academy. We do this by providing advanced training and practice in interdisciplinary research as well as by fostering an intellectual community of students and faculty within the department and across the wider University. We emphasize the development of independent programs of study while directing and enabling students' professionalization as researchers and teachers.

Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (http://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

Admission to the Ph.D. in American Studies

Completion of a bachelor’s degree is required of all applicants. Preference may be granted to students who hold a master's degree in American Studies or a related field. Admission is based primarily on the applicant’s statement of academic objectives, record of prior studies at the undergraduate or graduate level, and references from persons familiar with the applicant’s work. Evidence of preparation for graduate study may include substantial work in American Studies or related fields, such as American history, literature, art, media, sociology, anthropology, political science, journalism, or interdisciplinary studies. Prospective students must take the Graduate Record Examination and have the results forwarded to the Graduate Application Processing Center (http://wwwgraduate.ku.edu).

Submit your graduate application online (http://wwwgraduate.ku.edu). Send all other requested application materials to the department:

The University of Kansas
American Studies Program
Graduate Applications
Bailey Hall
1440 Jayhawk Blvd., Room 213
Lawrence, KS 66045-7545

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy in American Studies usually requires at least 30 credit hours beyond the Master’s degree. Courses taken to fulfill requirements for the Master of Arts in American Studies at KU also fulfill the requirements listed below. In consultation with the advisor, the student develops a plan of work that will provide expertise in three defined fields of study. The comprehensive examination certifies the student’s preparation in the chosen fields, and readiness to conduct research at a professional level. The degree program culminates in the completion and defense of the dissertation.

### Core Courses (12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMS 801</td>
<td>Introduction to American Studies (offered every fall)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMS 802</td>
<td>Theorizing America (offered every fall)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMS 803</td>
<td>Research Methods in American Studies (offered every spring)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMS 804</td>
<td>Research Seminar (offered every fall)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Graduate Seminars (9)

3 seminars with additional hours as needed for exam preparation.

### Research Skills Course (3)

1 elective methods course selected by the student and advisor provides methodological support for the student’s program of research and fulfills the Research Skills requirement.

### Doctoral Residency

The student spends at least 2 semesters (http://wwwpolicy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-program-time-contraints) enrolled full-time at the Lawrence campus.

### Comprehensive Examination

A combined written and oral examination (http://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-oral-exams) is evaluated by a committee of 5 faculty members, 1 of whom represents Graduate Studies. After completing required courses, the student prepares for the comprehensive examination by taking AMS 996 Exam Preparation hours.

### Continuous Enrollment

Following the comprehensive examination, the student enrolls full-time every semester (http://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-candidacy) (spring, summer, and fall) until completing 18 hours. Following the 18-hour mark, students enroll continuously every semester (spring, summer, and fall) in 1-9 hours of AMS 999 Dissertation until graduating.

### Prospectus

The student writes a brief proposal of the dissertation (http://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-dissertation) project, which is evaluated and accepted by a committee of 5 faculty members, including a representative of Graduate Studies.

### Dissertation Defense

Having completed the dissertation, the student defends it in an oral examination (http://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/final-oral-exams) before the committee of 5 faculty members.

### Filing

The student files copies of the dissertation with the university and the department, in compliance with all university policies and deadlines.

### Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination has written and oral components. Before sitting for the written component, the student develops preparation in the three concentration fields, including an understanding of the current state of scholarship in each; major prior research and scholarly controversies in the fields; the principal theoretical, conceptual, and methodological approaches informing that scholarship; and the directions that contemporary work is taking. When the advisor deems the student ready for examination, the examination committee presents questions covering these areas, and the student writes a time-limited response to each. After the written examination has been reviewed and accepted by the committee, the student may sit for the oral comprehensive
examination, which covers issues raised in the written examination as well as any other aspect of the student’s work in the doctoral program to date.

**Dissertation**

An interdisciplinary dissertation is required. The department has established a detailed description of the procedures for completing a dissertation. The student’s dissertation committee is composed of at least 4 faculty members, who initially review and approve the student’s research proposal and direct the research to its completion, and a fifth faculty member that serves as a representative of Graduate Studies.

**Final Examination**

All students must pass a final oral defense of the dissertation.

**Handbook for Graduate Students**

The department has prepared a handbook that summarizes procedures that a graduate student follows in working toward any one of the three graduate degrees. It contains a summary of regulations and departmental procedures and the rationale behind these regulations. The handbook is available online (http://americanstudies.ku.edu).