

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 a concentration--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 concentrations 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

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 (<https://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://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 M.A. in American Studies

Eligibility criteria for admission to the M.A. program follow Graduate Studies' admission policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>). To be considered for admission, a student must hold a bachelor's degree. 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.

A full list of the required application materials can be found on the American Studies website (<https://americanstudies.ku.edu/admission/>).

Non-native speakers of English must meet Graduate Studies' English proficiency requirements. (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/english-proficiency-international-students/>)

M.A. Degree Requirements

The Master of Arts in American Studies requires 30 credit hours, including courses and the completion of a research article or thesis.

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

Elective Methods

1 course selected by the student and their faculty advisor provides methodological support for the student's research. This may be a 500+ AMS or non-AMS methods course.

Elective Topics

3 courses, selected in consultation with the faculty advisor, constitute a coherent concentration, including historical depth in a defined area that prepares the student for either the master's thesis or publishable article. Courses must be numbered 500 or above and may be AMS or non-AMS courses. At least 50% of the course work counted toward the degree must be 700-level or above. The AMS core courses count toward this requirement.

Thesis Hours

After completing required courses, the student enrolls in AMS 899 and continues enrolling in thesis hours until their article or thesis is accepted by their defense committee.

Research Project and Defense

Students complete a project of original research, resulting in a thesis or scholarly article. A committee of three faculty members evaluates the project, and the student provides an oral defense.

Thesis Option

The thesis is an original piece of research and a contribution to the scholarly literature. It is smaller in scale than a doctoral dissertation and is not expected to have a comparable impact on the field. Theses typically range in length from 50 to 100 pages, divided into chapters, and are available to the public.

Article Option

The article option is intended for students who plan to extend their research project to the doctoral level or other continued professional activity. The article is an original piece of research and should be around 8,000 words in length. 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 Defense/M.A. Examination

The student must complete an oral defense of either the article or the thesis. 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 about meeting the degree requirements can be found in the Department's Graduate 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 from the M.A. 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. 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 Graduate Committee.