

# 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

Eligibility criteria for admission to the Ph.D. 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. 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.

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/>).

## Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy in American Studies requires the completion of eight courses (24 credit hours), the comprehensive examination, enrollment in dissertation hours, and the dissertation. In consultation with the faculty advisor, the student develops a plan of work that will provide expertise in three concentration fields of study. The comprehensive examination certifies the student's preparation in the concentration fields, and readiness to conduct research at a professional level. PhD students may choose to earn the MA in American Studies while pursuing the doctorate, upon completion of their course requirements and the defense

of a publishable article. The PhD program culminates in the completion and defense of the dissertation.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Core Courses</b>		
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
<b>Graduate Seminars</b>		
3 seminars numbered 700 or higher		9
<b>Research Skills Course</b>		
1 elective methods course selected by the student and advisor to provide methodological support for the student's program of research. Along with AMS 803, this course fulfills the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement (RS2).		3

**MA in American Studies (optional).** Upon completion of all coursework requirements, the student may choose to present a publishable article manuscript and defend it to a committee. The committee assesses the manuscript and oral defense with a grade of Pass or No Pass, by majority vote. This defense serves as an exam for the MA in American Studies.

**Transition from the MA Program.** Students admitted to the MA in American Studies at KU must petition the Department if they wish to continue for the PhD. 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 PhD program are at the discretion of the Graduate Committee.

**Comprehensive Examination.** Following the completion of required courses, the student enrolls in AMS 997 Examination Preparation to prepare for the comprehensive examination. In consultation with the faculty advisor, the student may also enroll in additional seminars or directed readings courses to prepare. When the advisor deems the student prepared, the student may apply to the Department to take the comprehensive examination, which is in two parts. The student must first sit for a time-limited, open-materials written examination to qualify for the oral. With a passing grade on the written examination, the student may sit for the oral examination before the examination committee. Candidacy is conferred after a successful oral examination.

**Dissertation.** The dissertation must be an original work of research that advances the interdisciplinary field of American Studies. The student must submit a brief prospectus of the dissertation project, including a detailed plan of work. All members of the dissertation committee must endorse the prospectus in order for the project to go forward. Upon completion of the dissertation research the student must defend the dissertation before all committee members in the "final oral examination," or dissertation defense. The student satisfies the dissertation requirement with a majority vote of "Satisfactory" by the dissertation committee. The committee may also recommend the student for Honors, which is a designation conferred by the Department at graduation.

**University Requirements.** Throughout the course of doctoral study, the student must fulfill all relevant College and University policies (<http://coga.ku.edu/graduate-policies/>), such as those concerning doctoral residency, time constraints, continuous enrollment, human subjects review, electronic filing, and graduation.

**Handbook.** Further details about meeting the degree requirements can be found in the Department's Graduate Handbook.