

SECTION 3: MASTER OF ARTS IN AMERICAN STUDIES

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

American Studies is an interdisciplinary field approximately 85 years old. Its purpose is to provide students with an integrated and critical knowledge of American culture and society by drawing upon such disciplines as agriculture, history, political science, English, sociology, mass communication, and education to foster a holistic understanding of the historical, social, and cultural underpinnings of the American experience. This approach also allows students to appreciate what is both exceptional and universal about the United States. Unlike other American Studies programs, NWOSU's is unique by using regional issues as a springboard to understanding national issues. Hence, nine hours of the program's core courses deal with Oklahoma and the American West while three hours deal with leadership issues in northwestern Oklahoma. Sixteen subsequent hours of electives are available for students to focus on larger national issues that meet their individual interests and career goals. Three hours of research and five hours in applied methodology round out the curriculum to provide students with an understanding of the ways in which the northwestern Oklahoma region influences the national American culture and vice versa.

OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives for the Master of Arts in American Studies program include:

1. Enabling students to explore and interpret the American experience from an interdisciplinary perspective that encompasses the fields of agriculture, history, political science, English, sociology, mass communication, and education.
2. Providing students with research skills and theoretical methodologies through which they will foster an integrative approach to learning about American culture and society, both past and present.
3. Providing students with an intimate knowledge of northwestern Oklahoma and the American West through which they will learn about the culture of the United States, understanding the ways in which regional issues affect the national culture and vice versa.
4. Helping students to achieve excellence in critical thinking through extensive writing, reading, research, and communication with peers, faculty, and community members.
5. Enabling students to initiate, develop, and carry out independent enquiry that will allow them to energize the region culturally and economically through leadership positions.
6. Preparing students for a wide range of employment opportunities by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and ethics that can be applied toward work in schools, junior colleges, archives, museums, galleries, media organizations, and in governmental, commercial, and cultural agencies.

Residency Requirement. A minimum of twenty-three semester hours, including the final eight hours, must be earned in residence at Northwestern Oklahoma State University. The remainder of the candidate's program (nine hours maximum) may be earned at other accredited institutions. These hours, or any part thereof, may be applied to the program only if, in the judgment of the student's graduate advisory committee and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, they contribute to the student's overall program.

Graduate Advisory Committee. An advisory committee is selected by each student in the American Studies program. The committee is responsible for assisting the student in planning a program of study, to compile the comprehensive exam essay questions, and to conduct the oral defense. The advisory committee shall consist of three members of the American Studies faculty (see www.nwosu.edu/american-studies for the list of faculty members). The committee chair must hold a terminal degree. The members' consent to serve and the approval of the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies is required. *Students are required to select their graduate advisory committee and meet with its members during their first semester of coursework.*

CAREERS

Job Outlook. According to the U.S. Bureau for Labor Statistics and the American Studies Association, employment for graduates with an American Studies background is expected to increase faster than the average through 2016. Competition for jobs as archivists, curators, museum technicians, and other service positions within these areas are expected to be strong. Employment in career areas such as public relations, sales, and marketing will be increasing at a similar rate. Students with computer and visual documentation skills have excellent job prospects. Such positions as archivists, public relation specialists, college professors, and youth programs manager are also expected to grow anywhere between 8% and 28%. The greatest value of the American Studies program is exposure to critical thinking in diverse academic disciplines that will help in a diverse number of occupational areas.

Career Opportunities. The American Studies program provides students interested in American culture, society, and history the opportunity to apply their background to a variety of professions in many career settings. Graduates of the American Studies program may prepare for careers in museums, government, law, communication, or higher education. Many business organizations have positions requiring American Studies backgrounds for public relations, art management, and tourism. Communication fields are another example of potential opportunity. Public sector jobs, government agencies, and publicly-supported institutions often seek American Studies graduates as interpreters, explaining an agency's or institution's function, projects, activities, or history to the public.

Job Settings. A graduate of American Studies can explore opportunities within archives, art museums, art management, business, the CIA/FBI, cultural organizations, consulting firms, colleges and universities, Department of Justice, discovery museums, foundations, historic sites, insurance companies, living history museums, galleries, government, historical societies, law, magazine writing/publishing, national parks, national history museums, Peace Corps/Americorps, political organizations, research firms, and tourism.

Job Titles. The following are some examples of common job titles for American Studies graduates: Archivist, Business Affairs Director, Collections Manager, Community Relations Director, Curator, Development Director, Educational Programs Director, Historian, Historic Preservation Specialist, Lobbyist, Market Research Analyst, Membership Coordinator, Museum Curator, Public Administrator, etc.

CURRICULUM FOR THE AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

The curriculum for the M.A. in American Studies degree consists of two components: required core courses and electives.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Coursework for the degree is interdisciplinary and makes up a 35 hour program. Degree requirements are listed below.

REQUIRED CORE COURSES

1. EDUC 5010 Graduate Study Seminar (required of all graduate students at the start of their first semester)
2. **Research (3 hours)**
HIST 5433 Historical Methods (Prerequisite: AMST 5103/Introduction to American Studies or instructor permission)
3. **Methodologies (5 hours)**
AMST 5103 Introduction to American Studies
Choose one of the following:
HIST 5402 Historic Preservations
HIST 5412 Museum Studies
HIST 5422 Public History
3. **Regional History and Issues (choose 9 hours)**
ENGL 5413 Popular Literature (when taught as Popular Literature: The Western)
HIST 5123 Oklahoma History and Government
HIST 5203 The American West
SOC 5133 Rural Sociology
SOC 5123 Social Gerontology
4. **Leadership (3 hours)**
Choose one of the following:
SOC 5263 Public Service Leadership
LEAD 5180 Leadership Northwest Oklahoma
LEAD 5580 American Legacy and Leadership

ELECTIVES (National Histories, Issues, and Perspectives)

Choose 15 hours from at least three of the following areas (15 hours)

- AGRI 5153 Agricultural Economics of Development
- EDUC 5763 Public School Finance
- EDUC 5903 Higher Education Philosophy and Practice
- EDUC 5943 Leadership in Adult Education Venues
- EDUC 5953 Institutional Management
- ENGL 5203 Contemporary Poetry
- ENGL 5213 Nonfiction Prose
- ENGL 5273 20th and 21st Century American Novel
- ENGL 5433 Nineteenth Century American Novel
- ENGL 5463 American Literature
- HIST 5113 U.S. Diplomatic History
- HIST 5213 American Colonial Period
- HIST 5223 The United States: 1783-1840
- HIST 5233 The United States: 1841-1877
- HIST 5313 The United States: 1933-Present
- HIST 5603 History of Economics in the United States
- HIST 5613 Native American History
- HIST 5623 The United States: 1877-1932
- HIST 5663 Survey of Latin American History
- HIST 5723 African American History
- MCOM 5113 Mass Communication Law and Ethics (offered only on the Alva campus)
- MCOM 5123 Advanced Strategic Communication (offered only on the Alva campus)
- MCOM 5213 Business and Professional Communication (offered only on the Alva campus)
- POLS 5113 Constitutional Studies
- POLS 5123 Advanced Political Theory
- POLS 5213 Public Policy Studies
- POLS 5223 Elements of Public Administration
- POLS 5253 Federal, State, and Local Relations
- POLS 5303 The Federal Legislative Branch
- POLS 5313 The Federal Executive Branch
- SOC 5113 Cultural Anthropology
- SOC 5203 Social Theory
- 5330 Thesis (from 3 to 6 hours)
- AMST 5500 Internship (from 3 to 6 hours)

Students may take a maximum of six credit hours in any combination of Individual Study (5170), Seminar (5190), and/or short courses (5300) as elective options with permission of their graduate advisory committee.

Note: All American Studies students must form their graduate advisory committee and meet with its members during the first semester of course work.