

Doctor of Philosophy in American Studies

The Ph.D. is a research degree awarded to students who demonstrate not only a mastery in the discipline of American Studies but also by the ability to carry out independent research and to present the results of such research in a scholarly manner. Students are required to enter the American Studies program with a committed first-year advisor.

Concentrations and Supporting Areas of Interest

Doctoral students in the American Studies program must declare both a concentration and a supporting area of interest. The supporting area of interest is a thematic field, for example, Native American Studies, Technology and Culture, or Women's Studies; this requirement is met by 9 credits of coursework and successful completion of comprehensive exams. Concentration requirements are met by 12 or more credits of coursework; students must choose from the following concentration options:

- American Arts - America's visual and performing arts have shaped the substance of American culture from America's founding moments through the present. MSU faculty have expertise in the history of American media, theater, painting, sculpture, and music as well as more specialized mastery of the theoretical underpinnings of these disciplines.
- American History - MSU has internationally recognized strengths in American history and its faculty offer courses from America's colonial period through the present. Many of the Department of History and Philosophy's courses are synchronic and diachronic and therefore serves as perfect points of entry for an interdisciplinary program like American Studies. Closely related to the discipline of history is the discipline of cultural geography. With its expertise in the history of western settlement patterns, the Earth Sciences Department also affords opportunities for collaboration.
- American Literature - It is widely assumed that people around the world understand America only through its electronically mediated exports. At universities around the world, students study American literature to master the metaphoric and syntactic structures of American culture. At MSU, faculty offer both breadth and depth in literary theory and past and present American literature.
- American Pluralism - America is a nation of difference and diversity. Students who focus on American pluralism will draw on the expertise of faculty in Anthropology, Latin American Studies, Native American Studies, Religious Studies, and Women's Studies.
- Public History - Public History is a discipline dedicated to the application of cultural criticism to museums, historical sites, and heritage tourism. The Department of History and Philosophy is home to MSU's Museum Studies Minor, a thriving "applied studies" program dedicated to preparing students for work in the museum field. At the graduate level, students would have the opportunity to develop research interests and critical theory dedicated to better understanding the role of museums in American culture.

Foreign Language

Students may be encouraged to demonstrate reading proficiency in a foreign language. This may be met by coursework (generally 2 semesters of one foreign language) or through an examination with the Department of Modern Languages & Literatures.

Plan of Study

Below is a list of required coursework for the American doctoral degree, and an outline of a generic plan of study for a student planning to graduate within 5 years.

Course Requirements

Required Coursework

AMST 501	Methods in American Studies	3
AMST 502	Research in American Studies	3
AMST 690	Doctoral Thesis	1-10

PhD Degree Completion in 5 years

Year 1	Credits	
	Fall	Spring
AMST 501 - Methods in American Studies	3	
Elective	3	
AMST 502 - Research in American Studies		3
Elective, Independent Study, or Internship		3
Year Total:	6	6
Year 2	Credits	
	Fall	Spring
Elective, Independent Study, or Internship	6	
Elective, Independent Study, or Internship		6
Year Total:	6	6
Year 3	Credits	
	Fall	Spring
Elective, Independent study, or Internship	6	
Elective, Independent Study, or Internship		6
Year Total:	6	6
Year 4	Credits	
	Fall	Spring
AMST 690 - Doctoral Thesis	6	
AMST 690 - Doctoral Thesis		3
Elective, Independent Study, or Internship		3
Year Total:	6	6
Year 5	Credits	
	Fall	Spring
AMST 690 - Doctoral Thesis	6	
AMST 690 - Doctoral Thesis		6
Year Total:	6	6
Total Program Credits:		60