American Studies

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**Williams Hall, 31 Williams Drive**

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**Core Faculty**

Dawn Keeley, Ph.D. (Department of English); Seth Moglen, Ph.D. (Department of English); John Pettigrew, Ph.D. (Department of History); Ed Whiteley, Ph.D. (Department of English)

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Offered at the graduate level, American Studies is the interdisciplinary study of American thought, literature, and culture—both past and present. Born in the early years of the Cold War and with an implied commitment to American exceptionalism, American Studies has since transformed itself into a multifaceted critical examination of United States society. Comparative frameworks along with close attention to applying cultural and literary theory to such matters as violence, citizenship, democracy, community, poverty and prosperity, politics, race, and gender in the United States make American Studies an intellectually sophisticated yet practical course of graduate study.

**M.A. IN AMERICAN STUDIES**

A Master of Arts degree in American Studies is offered in the College of Arts and Sciences. Candidates for the master’s degree must complete at least 30 credit hours, 18 of which must be at the 400 level.

**AMST 400** American Studies: Theory and Method  
Two humanities courses  
Two social science courses  
AMST 401 Special Topics in American Studies  
Remaining courses for the master’s degree will be divided between:

- AMST 490 Master’s Thesis  
- Other American Studies courses chosen at the student’s discretion and with the approval of the program director

**Total Credits** 30

1. Humanities courses include those offered in the departments of English, Art and Architecture, and Religion Studies. Social Studies courses include those offered in the departments of History, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, and Journalism and Communications.
2. To fulfill the thesis requirement students will write a long work of scholarship or two shorter papers, or create a documentary film.

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**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN DOCUMENTARY FILM**

Designed to augment social science and humanities graduate students’ education and training for employment inside and outside of the academy, this certificate program covers 1) the historical development and distinctive attributes of documentary film, including the genre’s impressive capacity for drawing large viewerships and, with that, communicating research-based knowledge to general publics; and 2) the production of documentary text—from conceiving of a topic and “storyboarding” a narrative; to taking interviews; to composing and filming a variety of shots; and to editing visual and audio material into final digital form.

The program broadly defines documentary film to facilitate understanding and production of texts from Youtube-like social media to feature-length theatrically-released films.

Completion of 12 credits, no more than 6 credits at the 300-level.

**AMST 425** Community Study Through Documentary Film  
**AMST 433** Documentary Film Production

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**Courses**

**AMST 347 (PHIL 347, REL 347) American Religious Thinkers 4 Credits**

An examination of the writings of key figures in the history of American religious thought (such as Edwards, Emerson, Bushnell, Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey and the Niebuhrs). Attention will be directed both to the historical reception of these writings and to their contemporary significance.

**Attribute/Distribution:** HU

**AMST 400 American Studies: Theory and Method 3 Credits**

An introduction to the theoretical orientations and methodological strategies of American Studies. Seminar involves extensive reading as well as application of theory and method to students’ research.

**AMST 401 Special Topics in American Studies 1-3 Credits**

Graduate seminar focused on one particular subject area in American Culture.

**AMST 402 Independent Study 3 Credits**

Individually supervised course in the area of American Culture. Consent of the program director required.

**AMST 425 Community Study Through Documentary Film 3 Credits**

A film production course concentrating on lighting, sound, shooting interviews (among other types of shots), and Final Cut Pro editing; matched with producing a team-made thirty-minute documentary film on a local historical or contemporary topic of critical interest.

**AMST 433 Documentary Film Production 3 Credits**

An independent study mode of course awarding credit for the production of a 30-minute documentary film that meets two standards: 1) high production value, and 2) scholarly content based on detailed research and driven by critical analysis.

**AMST 471 Special Topics 3 Credits**

**AMST 481 Independent Study 1-3 Credits**

**AMST 482 Independent Study 1-3 Credits**

**AMST 490 Master’s Thesis 1-6 Credits**

Independent work, with a faculty member, on a single master’s thesis or two thesis papers. Topic approved by individual faculty member. Typically taken in the last semester of course work.

**Repeat Status:** Course may be repeated.

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**AMST 490 Master’s Thesis 1-6 Credits**

Two courses in consultation with Graduate Certificate Director:  
Possible courses include:

- **HIST 438** Techniques in Public History  
- **HIST 305** Public History  
- **HIST 336** Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley  
- **HIST 337** History and Community Memory  
- **JOUR 325** Seminar in Journalism and Communication Issues

**Total Credits** 12

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