

# AMERICAN STUDIES

---

**Program Office:** 319-321 Hamilton; 212-854-6698  
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/amstudies/>

**Director:** Prof. Casey N. Blake, 321 Hamilton; 212-854-6698;  
 cb460@columbia.edu

**Associate Director:** Prof. Robert Amdur, 311 Hamilton; 212-854-4049;  
 rla2@columbia.edu

**Assistant Director:** Angela Darling, 319 Hamilton; 212-854-6698;  
 amd44@columbia.edu

**Administrative Assistant:** Laken King, 319 Hamilton; 212-854-6698;  
 lk2639@columbia.edu

American Studies offers students the opportunity to explore the experience and values of the people of the United States as embodied in their history, literature, politics, art, and other enduring forms of cultural expression. The program seeks to prepare students to confront with historical awareness the pressing problems that face our society. The program takes advantage of Columbia's location by involving students with the life of the city—working with community service organizations such as the Double Discovery Center, which serves New York City high school students; and by inviting leading figures in the local political and cultural scene to participate in colloquia, public conferences, and classroom discussions. It is an interdisciplinary program designed to be open and flexible while taking seriously the challenge of striving for a liberal education that helps prepare students for responsible citizenship.

## Advising

Each American Studies major or concentrator is assigned an academic adviser who monitors their progress through graduation. With at least ten advisers for each academic year, students are assured of individual attention and guidance. Advisers meet with students at least twice a semester.

## Departmental Honors

Students with a 3.6 minimum GPA in the major and an outstanding senior project are considered for honors. Normally no more than 10% of graduating majors receive departmental honors in a given year.

## Department Faculty

Casey N. Blake

Lynne Breslin

Andrew Delbanco

Todd Gitlin

Hilary Hallett

Michael Hindus

Thai Jones

Adam Kirsch

Roger Lehecka

Paul Levitz

Roosevelt Montas

Valerie Paley

Robert Pollack

Ross Posnock

Cathleen Price

Benjamin Rosenberg

James Shapiro

Maura Spiegel

Tamara Tweel

## Affiliated Faculty

Rachel Adams (English and Comparative Literature)

Courtney Bender (Religion)

Casey N. Blake (History; American Studies)

Jeremy Dauber (Germanic Languages)

Andrew Delbanco (English and Comparative Literature; American Studies)

Eric Foner (History)

Todd Gitlin (Journalism; Sociology)

Farah Griffin (English and Comparative Literature)

Frank Guridy (History)

Ira Katznelson (Political and History)

Alice Kessler-Harris (History)

Shamus Khan (Sociology)

Rebecca Kobrin (History)

Roosevelt Montás (Core and American Studies)

Ross Posnock (English and Comparative Literature; American Studies)

Wayne Proudfoot (Religion)

Jonathan Rieder (Sociology, Barnard)

Maura Spiegel (English and Comparative Literature)

## Guidelines for all American Studies Majors and Concentrators

### Declaring the Major or Concentration

Although students generally declare their major or concentration in the spring of their sophomore year, students may want to take electives early on in areas that interest them but that later connect with the American studies major.

### Grading

A grade lower than C- cannot be counted toward the major or concentration in American studies. A grade of C- can be counted only with the approval of the director or associate director. Pass/D/Fail courses do not count toward the major or concentration unless the course was taken before the student declared the major or concentration.

---

## Major in American Studies

A minimum of nine courses is required to complete the major. Please note that as of January 2018 Major requirements have changed, beginning with the Class of 2020. Please consult with the department if there are any questions.

### Two American Studies Core courses.

The following two courses are ordinarily required:

AMST UN1010	Introduction to American Studies
HIST UN2478	US INTELLECTUAL HIST 1865-PRES
or AMST UN3930	Tocqueville: The Democratic Mind

Please note, the AMST UN3930 section MUST be Freedom and Citizenship in the U.S. to count towards the core course requirement

#### Two seminars in American Studies

AMST UN3930	Tocqueville: The Democratic Mind
AMST UN3931	Topics in American Studies

#### Additional Courses

Four courses drawn from at least two departments, one of which must be in History and one of which must deal primarily with some aspect of American experience before 1900. (A course in U.S. History before 1900 would fulfill both requirements.)

#### Senior Research Project

The final requirement for the major in American Studies is completion of a senior essay, to be submitted in the spring of senior year. Alternatively, students may fulfill this requirement by taking an additional seminar in which a major paper is required or by writing an independent essay under the supervision of a faculty member. Seniors who wish to do a senior research project are required to take the Senior Project Colloquium AMST UN3920 in the fall of the senior year.

## Concentration in American Studies

A minimum of 7 courses is required to complete the concentration. Please note that as of January 2018 Concentration requirements have changed, beginning with the Class of 2020. Please consult with the department if there are any questions.

#### Two American Studies Core courses.

The following are ordinarily required:

AMST UN1010	Introduction to American Studies
HIST UN2478	US INTELLECTUAL HIST 1865-PRES
or AMST UN3930	Tocqueville: The Democratic Mind

Please note, the AMST UN3930 section MUST be Freedom and Citizenship in the U.S. to count towards the core course requirement

#### Additional Courses

Select five additional courses drawn from at least two departments, one of which must be in History, and one of which must deal with the period before 1900.

## American Studies

### AMST UN1010 Introduction to American Studies. 4 points.

This course is an interdisciplinary exploration of the values and cultural expressions of the people of the United States since the late nineteenth century. We will examine a variety of works in literature, history, cultural and social criticism, music, the visual arts and the built environment with an eye to understanding how Americans of different backgrounds, living at different times and in different locations, have understood and argued about the meaning and significance of American national identity. Our goal is to make connections between different genres of expression and consider how different cultural forms have served as opportunities to ponder the meaning of modern life in the United States. Lectures and readings will give particular attention to the sites—real and imagined—where Americans have identified the promise and perils of American life. Discussion section required: AMST UN1011

#### Spring 2021: AMST UN1010

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
AMST 1010	001/10378	M W 10:10am - 11:25am Online Only	Maura Spiegel, Roosevelt Montas	4	52/80

### AMST UN1011 Disc. Sec. Intro. to American Studies. 0 points.

Corequisites: AMST UN1010

This is the required discussion section for AMST UN1010 Intro to American Studies

### AMST UN3920 American Studies Senior Project Colloquium. 1 point.

Required for American studies students who intend to do a senior research project

This course is for American studies majors planning to complete senior projects in the spring. The course is designed to help students clarify their research agenda, sharpen their questions, and locate their primary and secondary sources. Through class discussions and a "workshop" peer review process, each member of the course will enter spring semester with a completed bibliography that will provide an excellent foundation for the work of actually writing the senior essay. The colloquium will meet every other week and is required for everyone planning to do a senior research project. Application due June 15. See American Studies website.

#### Fall 2020: AMST UN3920

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
AMST 3920	001/14321		Casey Blake	1	6/15

#### Spring 2021: AMST UN3920

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
AMST 3920	001/11725			1	0/10

**AMST UN3930 Tocqueville: The Democratic Mind. 4.00 points.**

Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is considered a classic study on the United States. But more fundamentally it is an analysis of the democratic human type (*l'homme démocratique*) with his or her distinctive passions, fears, aspirations, prejudices, and self-image. In this seminar we will focus on Tocqueville's psychology and the light it might shed on American culture

Fall 2020: AMST UN3930

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
AMST 3930	004/13728	M 6:10pm - 8:00pm Online Only	Benjamin Rosenberg	4.00	18/18
AMST 3930	005/13994	T 10:10am - 12:00pm Online Only	James Shapiro	4.00	14/18
AMST 3930	007/13979	W 12:10pm - 2:00pm Online Only	Caroline Miller	4.00	16/18
AMST 3930	009/14049	M 4:10pm - 6:00pm Online Only	Richard John	4.00	17/18
AMST 3930	010/15316	W 10:10am - 12:00pm Online Only	Hilary-Anne Hallett	4.00	10/18
AMST 3930	002/13976	M 4:10pm - 7:50pm Online Only	Mark Lilla	4.00	5/18

**AMST UN3931 Topics in American Studies. 4 points.**

Please refer to the Center for American Studies for section descriptions

Spring 2021: AMST UN3931

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
AMST 3931	001/10181	T 2:10pm - 4:00pm Online Only	Casey Blake	4	7/18
AMST 3931	002/10182	W 2:10pm - 4:00pm Online Only	Roosevelt Montas	4	16/18
AMST 3931	004/10183	W 12:10pm - 2:00pm Online Only	John McWhorter	4	0/18
AMST 3931	005/10185	M 2:10pm - 4:00pm Online Only	Andrew Delbanco, Roger Lehecka	4	14/18
AMST 3931	006/10186	T 4:10pm - 6:00pm Online Only	Cathleen Price	4	0/15
AMST 3931	007/10187	Th 4:10pm - 6:00pm Online Only	Michael Hindus	4	0/18
AMST 3931	009/10458	Th 12:10pm - 2:00pm Online Only	Ross Posnock	4	7/18

**AMST UN3990 Senior Research Seminar. 4 points.**

Open to American Studies seniors doing a research project.

Prerequisites: AMST UN3920

A seminar devoted to the research and writing, under the instructor's supervision, of a substantial paper on a topic in American studies. Class discussions of issues in research, interpretation, and writing.

Spring 2021: AMST UN3990

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
AMST 3990	001/10380		Casey Blake	4	4/10

**AMST UN3997 Supervised Individual Research. 1-4 points.**

For students who want to do independent study of topics not covered by normal program offerings, or for senior American studies majors working on the Senior Honors Project independent of 3990y. The student must find a faculty sponsor and work out a plan of study; a copy of this plan should be submitted to the program director.

**HIST UN2478 US INTELLECTUAL HIST 1865-PRES. 4.00 points.**

This course examines major themes in U.S. intellectual history since the Civil War. Among other topics, we will examine the public role of intellectuals; the modern liberal-progressive tradition and its radical and conservative critics; the uneasy status of religion in a secular culture; cultural radicalism and feminism; critiques of corporate capitalism and consumer culture; the response of intellectuals to hot and cold wars, the Great Depression, and the upheavals of the 1960s. Fields(s): US

Fall 2020: HIST UN2478

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
HIST 2478	001/13376	M W 4:10pm - 5:25pm Online Only	Casey Blake	4.00	100/300