

# American Studies

Interdisciplinary

## Faculty

**Kevin M. Britz**

Director, Assistant Professor of American Studies

Melissa Dabakis

Professor of Art History

Ennis B. Edmonds

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

John M. Elliott

Professor of Political Science

Lewis Hyde

Richard L. Thomas Professor of Creative Writing (first semester only)

P. Frederick Kluge

Writer-in-Residence (first semester only)

David H. Lynn

Professor of English

Janet E. McAdams

Robert P. Hubbard Professor in Poetry; Associate Professor of English

Kim McMullen

John Crowe Ransom Professor of English

Peter Rutkoff

Robert A. Oden Jr. Professor of American Studies

Howard L. Sacks

Senior Advisor to the President; Professor of Sociology

William B. Scott

Professor of History (on leave)

Ric S. Sheffield

Associate Provost; Associate Professor of Sociology and Legal Studies

Judy R. Smith

Professor of English

Gregory P. Spaid

Provost; Professor of Studio Art

Thomas P. Stamp

Associate Vice President for Communications

Jonathan E. Tazewell

Associate Professor of Drama

Jan E. Thomas

Associate Professor of Sociology

American studies provides a broad framework for the exploration of the people, places, society, and culture of the United States. American studies accomplishes this by appropriating ideas and methodologies from one field and applying them to another and by transcending established boundaries among disciplines to create a new structure that combines traditional values and new visions.

## Requirements for the Major

The major in American studies consists of 6 units:

- AMST 108 Introduction to American Studies (.5 unit)
- Four diversification courses (2 units)
- Five courses of elective study (2.5 units)
- The Senior Seminar (1 unit)

**AMST 108 Introduction to American Studies (.5 unit).** This course is normally taken during the first or second year at Kenyon.

### Diversification courses (2 units).

See the list of courses below. One unit must be from A. History and Politics, and one unit from B. Culture and Society. Some courses may have prerequisites in the home department; others may have limited enrollment. Students majoring in American studies should work closely with their advisors to ensure their acceptance.

**A. History and Politics.** Two courses (1 unit) from the following:

- AMST 310 American Culture and the Environment
- HIST 101D U.S. History, 1492-1865
- HIST 102D U.S. History, 1865 to Present
- HIST 175 Early African-American History

HIST 176 Contemporary African-American History

HIST 205/PSCI 309 U.S. Political History

HIST 208 Women in America

HIST 388 Public History

HIST 411 Civil Rights Era

PSCI 200 Liberal Democracy in America

PSCI 301 American Presidency

PSCI 331 American Political Thought

**B. Culture and Society.** Two courses (1 unit) from the following:

AMST 109D American Art and Culture

AMST 222 The American West

AMST 314 American College and University Architecture

AMST 382 Baseball and American Culture

AMST 405Y-406Y Global Cities

AMST 483 Ghost Towns

ARHS 227 American Art to 1865

ENGL 270 American Fiction

ENGL 280 American Modernist Literature

HIST 189 African-American History through Fiction

MUSC 302 The History of Jazz

RLST 230 Religion and Society in America (U.S.)

RLST 332 African-American Religions

SOCY 111 American Society

SOCY 246 American Folk Music

**Elective study (2.5 units).** Five

courses from a single area, discipline, or set of disciplines that form a coherent program in American studies. Examples of such areas would be: writing and literature, race and ethnicity, history and society, politics and economics, African-American studies, women's studies, law and society, landscape and the environment, America in a global context, or another category of student and faculty agreement. The elective-study program undertaken by the student requires approval of the director of the American Studies Program. At least one unit (2 courses) must be at the 300 or 400 level.

**Senior Seminar (1 unit).** A two-semester sequence taken during the senior year. The Senior Seminar will typically entail collaborative research and public presentation.

## The Senior Exercise

The Senior Exercise in American studies may take several forms, but it must draw on the elective-study component of the major, identifying and then developing, through original research, a major theme that the student has identified as central to his or her work in American studies. By the final Friday in September, majors in American studies will present their plans for the Senior Exercise to their advisors and to the program director.

The exercise itself will have two parts: (1) a presentation (visual, oral, electronic) to selected majors and faculty in American studies; and (2) a written analysis or documentation of the work presented. The Senior Exercise will be presented no later than the last Friday in April in the spring semester.

## Honors

The Honors Program in American studies entails a two-semester (1 unit) sequence of independent work integral to the elective-study program in the major, taken during the senior year (AMST 497Y-498Y). The program will result in an honors project that may take a variety of forms but shall include a written component and a public presentation or performance. Honors work will be evaluated by an external examiner. Students with an overall GPA of 3.33 and a GPA of 3.5 in the major become eligible for admission to the Honors Program during the second semester of their third year. To enter the Honors Program, students must be nominated by an American studies faculty member. Following the recommendation, a formal proposal containing a statement of intent, a tentative bibliography, and a project outline must be sent to the project

advisor and the director of American studies for approval by April 1. Exceptions to the GPA requirements may occasionally be granted by petition.

## The Concentration in American Studies

The concentration in American studies, encompassing 3 units of work, consists of three components: a one-semester introductory course, AMST 108 (.5 unit); three semester courses in curricular options (1.5 units); and a two-semester senior seminar (1 unit). Students may choose among several pathways that will fulfill the curricular-options requirement. To obtain a list of specific courses that fall under these categories, students should consult the director of the American Studies Program. Courses required for a student's major cannot count toward completion of the American studies course requirements. Coursework undertaken for American studies must be over and above work required by a major department.

Students who are considering the concentration should consult with Kevin Britz, director of American studies, before enrolling in classes.

## Year Courses

### Special Topic Senior Seminar

AMST 491-492Y (1 unit)  
Britz, Rutkoff

The senior seminar in American studies will provide senior majors with research tools, strategies, and guidance for the elaboration of a significant research project. During the first semester, the seminar will attend regular presentations of student work in progress. In the second semester, students will share their research using a peer-evaluation matrix. American studies senior status required.

### Senior Honors Project

AMST 497-498Y (1 unit)  
Staff

The honors program in American studies entails a two-semester se-

quence of independent work integral to the elective-study program in the major, taken during the senior year. Prerequisite: permission of the American studies faculty.

### Fieldwork: Rural Life

SOCY 477Y-478Y (1 unit)  
Sacks

This course provides an introduction to fieldwork techniques and to the ethical and political issues raised by our purposeful involvement in other people's lives. Students will spend considerable time conducting original field research throughout Knox County, with the results to be presented publicly. Our research will generally consider the character of rural society, with particular focus on the local food system. Students will conduct a community food assessment, examining the character and adequacy of local food production, distribution, and access. The results of this research will provide the basis for a major effort to build a sustainable market for food produced in Knox County. This course satisfies the senior seminar requirement in American studies. Prerequisites: permission of instructor.

## First-Semester Course

### American Culture and Environment

AMST 310 (.5 unit)  
Britz

Environmental history offers broad new insights into the understanding of American culture. From the introduction of old world pathogens by European explorers to the rise of modern environmentalism, Americans' attitudes have been shaped by their experiences in our vast landscape. This course will explore how attitudes toward nature evolved over time and how these ideas, in turn, transformed the face of the natural world. We will be looking at the environmental history of the United States through a series of questions: How have human activities historically depended on and interacted

with nature? How have attitudes toward natural resources shaped patterns of life? How has technology shaped attitudes and landscapes? How did philosophies toward the land affect the reshaping of the landscape? What have been the consequences of these alterations? Students will seek to answer these questions through readings of historic case studies and examinations of literature, art, and film. This course requires extensive reading and is designed for upper-level students. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. Enrollment limited.

## Second-Semester Courses

### United States History, 1865-Present

- ◆ AMST 102D (.5 unit)  
Staff

This course is a thematic survey of the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present. Students will examine the transformation of the United States from a rural, largely Protestant society into a powerful and culturally diverse, urban/industrial nation. Topics will include constitutional developments, the formation of a national economy, urbanization, and immigration. The course will also discuss political changes, the secularization of the public culture, the formation of the welfare state, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War as well as suburbanization, the civil rights movement, women's and gay rights, and the late twentieth-century conservative-politics movement and religious revival. No prerequisites. This course is the same as HIST 102D, in the history curriculum.

### Introduction to American Studies

- ◆ AMST 108 (.5 unit)  
Rutkoff

This course, focusing on American culture between 1936 and 1945, will explore artifacts such as a W.P.A. documentary, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Japanese-American internment, and "Rosie the Riveter."

Guest lectures and presentations will complement the course, and students will be asked to engage actively in its development. Guest lectures and presentations complement the course, and students will be asked to engage actively in its development. No prerequisites.

### American College and University Architecture

- AMST 314 (.5 unit)  
Stamp

College and university campuses, from picturesque Gothic and Georgian wonderlands to the starkly modern and utilitarian assemblages of more recent years, have long been a source of fascination for Americans. They play a large role in the romantic ideal of college life, they evoke images of privilege or openness, and they are increasingly seen as a sales tool by marketers. If we look beyond the most superficial aspects of campuses, though, their physical appearances can reveal a great deal about an institution's history, its goals and philosophy, even its relative place in the nation's higher-education hierarchy. This course will look at a variety of campuses and campus types—urban, suburban, and rural, public and private, old and new—and end with a class project involving development of an ideal campus. Limited enrollment. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

### Baseball and American Culture

- ◆ AMST 382 (.5 unit)  
Rutkoff

Baseball and American Culture will look at the wide range of representations of the national game in American culture. The course will examine literature, poetry, and drama as well as the visual arts as a way of understanding the power of baseball on our cultural imagination. The seminar will focus on group discussion, collaborative presentations, and individual analysis. This course is for first-year students with AP or KAP credit in American history or American studies. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Enrollment limited to twelve.

### The following courses, offered in 2007-08, may be taken for credit toward the major or concentration in American Studies:

- ARHS 227 American Art to 1865
- ENGL 270 American Fiction
- ENGL 271 The Confidence Game in America
- ENGL 280 American Literary Modernism
- ENGL 288 Introduction to African-American Literature
- ENGL 372 The Gilded Age
- ENGL 382 The Jazz Age
- ENGL 385 Contemporary American Poetry
- ENGL 388 African American Literature, 1945-1980
- ENGL 471 Hawthorne and Melville
- ENGL 486 The Little Magazine in America
- HIST 102D United States History, 1865 to Present
- HIST 175 Early African-American History
- HIST 176 Contemporary African-American History
- HIST 189 African-American History through Fiction and Film
- HIST 205 U.S. Political History
- HIST 208 U.S. Women's History
- HIST 408 Native Voices: Self and Society through North American Indian Autobiography
- HIST 411 The Civil Rights Era
- PSCI 200 Liberal Democracy in America
- PSCI 301 The American Presidency
- PSCI 309 American Political History
- PSCI 310 Public Policy
- PSCI 312 American Constitutional Law
- PSCI 391.01 Special Topic: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity
- PSCI 461 U.S. Defense Strategy
- RLST 232 Afro-Caribbean Spirituality
- RLST 332 African-American Religions
- RLST 411 Trials, Debates, and Controversies
- SOCY 111.07 American Society
- SOCY 229 Social Movements

**Additional  
courses available  
another year  
include:**

- AMST 101D United States History,  
1492-1865
- AMST 109D American Art and  
Culture, 1900-1945
- AMST 191 August Wilson and  
Pittsburgh
- AMST 222 The American West
- AMST 224 History of Women in the  
United States
- AMST 291 Special Topic: History of  
the American Western film
- AMST 336 Special Topic: Theory  
and Politics in Black Women's  
Writing
- AMST 378 Memory and Commem-  
oration in American Culture
- AMST 381-382Y North by South:  
The Great African-American  
Migration, 1900-1960
- AMST 405-406Y Global Cities  
Seminar: Americans in Paris
- AMST 483 American Ghost Towns:  
An Archaeology of Place and  
Dreams