

# American Studies

## *Interdisciplinary*

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

American studies is a highly selective major requiring intellectual independence and maturity. If you wish to be admitted to the major, you may write a short essay explaining your goals, developing the six-course plan you will follow, and detailing the trajectory of your course of study.

### FACULTY

**Peter M. Rutkoff**, Director, Professor of American Studies

**Sylvie Coulibaly**, Assistant Professor of History

**Melissa Dabakis**, Professor of Art History

**Ennis B. Edmonds**, Associate 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, Editor of the *Kenyon Review*

**Kim McMullen**, John Crowe Ransom Professor of English

**Glenn M. McNair**, Associate Professor of History

**Sam Pack**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology

**Howard L. Sacks**, Professor of Sociology

**William B. Scott**, Professor of History

**Ric S. Sheffield**, Associate Provost; Associate Professor of Sociology and Legal Studies

**Judy R. Smith**, Professor of English

**Gregory P. Spaid**, Professor of Studio Art

**Thomas P. Stamp**, College Historian and Keeper of Kenyoniana

**Jonathan E. Tazewell**, Thomas S. Turgeon Professor of Drama

**Jan E. Thomas**, Associate Professor of Sociology

**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)
- Six courses of elective study (3 units)
- The Senior Seminar (.5 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 should 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 101D/HIST 101D U.S. History, 1492-1865  
 AMST 102D/HIST 102D U.S. History, 1865 to Present  
 HIST 175 Early Black History  
 HIST 176 Contemporary African-American History  
 HIST 205/PSCI 309 U.S. Political History  
 HIST 208 U.S. Women's History  
 HIST 388 Practice and Theory of History  
 HIST 411 Civil Rights Era  
 AMST 200D/PSCI 200D Liberal Democracy in America  
 PSCI 301 American Presidency

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

AMST 109 American Art and Culture, 1900-1945  
 AMST 314 American College and University Architecture  
 AMST 382 Baseball and American Culture  
 ARHS 227D American Art to 1865  
 ENGL 270 American Fiction  
 ENGL 280 American Literary Modernism  
 HIST 380 Black History through Fiction and Film  
 AMST 302D/MUSC 302D The History of Jazz  
 RLST 230 Religion and Society in America (U.S.)  
 RLST 332 African-American Religions  
 AMST 229D/SOCY 229D Social Movements  
 SOCY 246 American Folk Music

**Elective study (3 units).** Six 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, and America in a global context. Many other areas of focus are possible as well. 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 (.5 unit).** A one-semester seminar taken during the spring of the senior year. The Senior Seminar will typically entail individual 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); four semester courses in curricular options (2 units); and a one-semester senior seminar (.5 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 Peter Rutkoff, director of American studies, before enrolling in classes.

## AMERICAN STUDIES COURSES

**AMST 101D United States History, 1492-1865***Credit: .5 unit*

This course is a thematic survey of United States history from European conquest through the Civil War. Through lectures, discussions, and readings, students will examine the nation's colonial origin, the impact of European conquest of the native peoples, the struggle for national independence, and the formation of a national government. The second half of the course will focus on the making of a modern nation. Topics will include the expansion of the market economy, chattel slavery, and the factory system. The course will also look at early urbanization, the rise of egalitarianism, religious movements, the first women's movements, and the defeat of the southern secessionist movement. No prerequisites. This course is the same as HIST 101D in the history curriculum.

*Instructor: Scott***AMST 102D United States History, 1865-Present***Credit: .5 unit*

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 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.

*Instructor: Scott***AMST 108 Introduction to American Studies***Credit: .5 unit*

This course introduces students to the principles of American studies through the exploration of American history and culture in the 1960s. We will seek to understand the nature of American society in that critical period through the study of the struggle for political reform, the role of women, the civil rights movement, and the counter-culture. Guest lectures, films, and student presentations complement the course, and students will be asked to engage actively in its development. No prerequisites.

**AMST 109 American Art and Culture, 1900-1945***Credit: .5 unit*

In this course, we will study visual culture in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. We will look at art, architecture, and popular media within a broad cultural context in relation to film, literature, history, and politics. We will explore such themes as the search for an American identity, the issue of cultural nationalism, the interaction between European modernism and a native realist tradition, and the relationship among art, politics, and social activism. In so doing, we will employ an American studies interdisciplinary model by focusing on a number of artifacts, such as the Armory Show, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Gambier Post

Office mural. This course is cross-listed in the Department of Art and Art History. No prerequisite.

*Instructor: Dabakis***AMST 110 August Wilson and Black Pittsburgh***Credit: .5 unit*

The great African American playwright, August Wilson, set his cycle of plays in Pittsburgh's one dynamic neighborhood, the Hill. This seminar will read a series of Wilson's plays, including "Joe Turner's Come and Gone", "The Piano Lesson", and "Fences", and locate them in time and place in African-American history. This course is for first year students with AP or KAP credit in American History or American Studies and a critical aspect of the course will be a three-day field work experience in the Hill District of Pittsburgh. Permission of the instructor.

*Instructor: Rutkoff***AMST 200D Liberal Democracy in America***Credit: .5 unit*

The course explores the guiding principles, major institutions, and national politics of the American political order. The Founders' view of liberal democracy and of the three branches of our government (presented in the *Federalist Papers*) will provide the basis for consideration of the modern Supreme Court, presidency, bureaucracy, Congress, news media, and political parties and elections. The course concludes with Tocqueville's broad overview of American democracy and its efforts to reconcile liberty and equality. The themes of the course will be illustrated by references to current political issues, events, and personalities. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or permission of the instructor. Offered every year. This course is the same as PSCI 220D, listed in the political science curriculum.

**AMST 227D American Art to 1865***Credit: .5 unit*

This course presents an overview of painting, sculpture, and architecture from colonial times to 1865. It frames the development of American art and architecture within a broad socio-historical context and addresses many of the issues pertinent to American studies. The following questions, among others, will be addressed in the course: Does American culture have a single, identifiable character? How have Americans reconciled their uneasy relationship with European culture? How have American political values, such as freedom, liberty, and democracy, informed the cultural expression of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Prerequisite: ARHS 111 or AMST 108 or equivalent. This course is the same as ARHS 227D in the art history curriculum.

**AMST 229D Social Movements***Credit: .5 unit*

This mid-level course will examine social movements as attempts to bring about social change through collective action. The major goals of the course are: (1) to acquaint students with the sociological literature on social movements; (2) to examine the development, life cycle, and impact of several important social movements in the United States; (3) to examine issues of race, class, and gender within social movements; and (4) to develop students' skills in thinking sociologically about social discontent and social change. Substantively the course

focuses primarily on U.S. social movements from the 1960s through today. This course also includes a service-learning component. Each student will work with a community agency two to three hours per week. Prerequisite: introductory sociology course or permission of instructor. This course is the same as SOCY 229D, listed in the sociology curriculum, and may be counted toward the major in American studies.

### **AMST 302D The History of Jazz**

*Credit: .5 unit*

The most fascinating thing about jazz is its vitality. Jazz remains today what it has been since its inception: an art form of intense personal expression in the context of collaborative improvisation. This course is a social and stylistic investigation of the history of jazz, from its African-American origins up to the present. Progressing chronologically, students will investigate through a variety of sources the main jazz styles and musicians and their development and influence upon the jazz scene. Prerequisite: MUSC 101 (or placement by exam) and either 102 or 103. Declared American studies majors may enroll in this course with only MUSC 101 as prerequisite, though 102 or 103 are recommended. Offered every other year. This course is the same as MUSC 302D in the music curriculum.

### **AMST 314 American College and University Architecture**

*Credit: .5 unit*

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. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

*Instructor: Stamp*

### **AMST 378D Topics in American Art**

*Credit: .5 unit*

This advanced seminar will explore topics and issues of the study of American art and architecture. Topics covered may range from the women of Rome to African-American women artists to memory and commemorations: cross-cultural perspectives. Assignments will include seminar reports, class discussion, and a research paper. Prerequisite: .5 unit of Art History (ARHS 111, 227, 231) or American studies (AMST 108, 109) or equivalent. This course is the same as ARHS 378D, in the art history curriculum.

### **AMST 381 Senior Seminar In American Studies**

*Credit: .5 unit*

The course will provide a setting for guided student advanced work in American studies. The participants will work collaboratively to assist one another in the development of individual research projects that represent the synthesis of the six

courses they have crafted for the major in American studies. The course is required of all American studies senior majors and concentrators. Prerequisite: permission of instructor.

*Instructor: Rutkoff*

### **AMST 382 Baseball and American Culture**

*Credit: .5 unit*

This course 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. Students may take the course for credit in American studies or English. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

*Instructor: Rutkoff*

### **AMST 401 Framing Intellectual Property**

*Credit: .5 unit*

Digital copying and internet file-sharing have given rise to a heated national debate over the ownership of art and ideas. On the one hand, we have the film and recording industries aggressively protecting and enlarging their holdings; on the other, we have a range of open-source initiatives, not just in software but in cultural production generally (as with, for example, scholars, scientists, and artists who post their work for free on the internet). The particulars of this contest are new, but its roots are very old, going back at least to the seventeenth-century, when publishers and governments first attempted to strike a balance between private incentive and the public good. Students in this seminar will trace the history of such attempts from their beginnings into the present; special emphasis will fall on how the founding generation in the United States imagined the circulation of knowledge. Through this history, students will become familiar with the several frames of reference within which this cultural debate has been held; they will thus explore the philosophical, economic, legal, and ethical issues that surround what has come to be called "intellectual property." Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Offered every two or three years.

*Instructor: Hyde*

### **AMST 493 Individual Study**

*Credit: .5 unit*

Normally, students who wish to pursue individual study in the American Studies Program should be aware of the following procedures:

Individual study is an exceptional opportunity available to junior or senior majors who find that the ordinary course offerings at Kenyon do not meet their needs for the major. Individual study may be taken only for .5 unit of credit. Students must have the prior approval of the program director in order to apply.

They must present a detailed reading list and syllabus, including a schedule of assignments/projects and due dates, to the faculty member with whom they choose to work.

The American Studies faculty member will confirm the syllabus and schedule in writing to the director of the program.

The student project must culminate in a public presentation.

Evaluation is a combination of student self-evaluation and faculty evaluation, both of which will be reported to the program director with a recommendation for a final grade.

**AMST 497Y Senior Honors Project***Credit: .5 unit*

The Honors Program in American studies entails a two-semester sequence of independent work integral to the elective-study program in the major, taken during the senior year.

Prerequisite: permission of the American studies faculty.

*Instructor: Rutkoff*

**AMST 498Y Senior Honors Project***Credit: .5 unit*

See the description for AMST497Y.

*Instructor: Rutkoff*

**ADDITIONAL COURSES THAT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS MAJOR:**

AFDS 108: The Crossroads Seminar  
 ARHS 227D: American Art to 1865  
 ARHS 377: Topics in Modern Art  
 ARTS 229: Documentary Photography  
 DRAM 218: Introduction to Film  
 ENGL 270: American Fiction  
 ENGL 271: Confidence Game in America  
 ENGL 280: American Literary Modernism  
 ENGL 283: Introduction to Native American Literature  
 ENGL 288: Introduction to African-American Literature  
 ENGL 372: The Gilded Age  
 ENGL 378: Race in the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination  
 ENGL 379Y: American Literature  
 ENGL 380Y: American Literature  
 ENGL 382: The Jazz Age  
 ENGL 384: Imaging America in the Novel  
 ENGL 388: Studies in Twentieth-Century African-American Literature  
 ENGL 471: Hawthorne: Nation and Transnation in Hawthorne's Fiction  
 ENGL 473: Faulkner  
 ENGL 483: Contemporary Indigenous American Poetry  
 ENGL 486: The Little Magazine in America  
 ENV5 112: Introduction to Environmental Studies  
 HIST 101D: United States History, 1492-1865  
 HIST 102D: United States History, 1865-Present  
 HIST 175: Early Black History  
 HIST 176: Contemporary Black History  
 HIST 205: U.S. Political History: the Great Depression and World War Two  
 HIST 208: U.S. Women's History  
 HIST 275: World War II  
 HIST 310: The Civil War  
 HIST 313: Black Intellectuals  
 HIST 316: Jazz Age: 1900-1930  
 HIST 356: Vietnam  
 HIST 388: Practice and Theory of History  
 HIST 400: American Revolution  
 HIST 411: The Civil Rights Era  
 MUSC 302D: The History of Jazz  
 PSCI 200D: Liberal Democracy in America  
 PSCI 301: The American Presidency  
 PSCI 309: American Political History  
 PSCI 310: Public Policy  
 PSCI 312: American Constitutional Law  
 PSCI 332: African-American Political Thought

PSCI 461: U.S. Defense Strategy Seminar

PSCI 465: International Terrorism

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

RLST 232: Afro-Caribbean Spirituality

RLST 332: African-American Religions

RLST 342: Religion and Popular Music in the African Diaspora

RLST 411: Trials, Debates, and Controversies

SOCY 104: Identity in American Society

SOCY 229D: Social Movements

SOCY 232: Sexual Harassment: Normative Expectations and Legal Questions

SOCY 246: American Folk Music

SOCY 250: Systems of Stratification

SOCY 422: Topics in Social Stratification

**SOME RECENTLY OFFERED SPECIAL TOPICS**

Religious Music of America: From Hymn to Gospel, Shape Note to Hip Hop

Selling the Story: Music, Narrative, and the American Audience