What is American Studies?

American Studies seeks to understand the depth and complexity of the society and culture of the United States. Even in saying that, we notice that the United States contains many different cultures that are simultaneously different from each other, and yet tied together by history, experience, and cultural blending. Studying American culture and society, then, in all its diversity, often raises questions that require the perspectives of many different scholarly disciplines to answer them. This interdisciplinary approach can include a wide range of methods from history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, art history, literature, musicology, critical legal studies, political science, cultural studies, religious studies, urban planning, philosophy, and even the natural sciences. American Studies takes a critical stance to American culture, meaning that it seeks to explain how and why American culture is what it has been, is, and may become; and to understand the inequalities and injustice alongside the triumphs and successes of the American story. This also includes seeing the United States as one nation among many, with global influence, power, and connections in the modern world. Exploring the breadth of American culture in this way can help students grow into critical and complex thinkers, well-prepared for various careers and to be responsible and aware citizens.

HUMANITIES MAJOR
CONCENTRATION IN
AMERICAN STUDIES

Core (10 units)
HUM 85 Intro to Liberal Education
HUM 101 Human Life
AMS 160 Special Topics
AMS 190 Senior Seminar

Comparative Courses (12 units):
AMS 129 How the World Sees the US
AMS 159 Nature and World Culture
CA 173 Contemporary World Arts
HUM 119A Studies of Antiquity
HUM 128 West in Global Context
RELS 124 Lit & Religious Experience
RELS 130 Psych & Rel Experience
RELS 131 Gender, Sexuality & Rel

Additional AMS Courses (9 units)
AMS 129 How the World Sees the US
AMS 160 Special Topics
AMS 169 The American Dream
AMS 179 American Pop Culture
CA 172 Arts in US Society
RELS 162 Rel & Pol Controversy in US

Electives (12 units):
Students choose courses from across the university from a list of approved courses, including at least one from each of the following categories: Values and Ideas; Arts and Popular Culture; Economics, History, Politics and Society; Gender, Family and Sexuality; and Race, Ethnicity and Immigration. For details and to choose classes right for you, see an American Studies Advisor.

TOTAL CREDITS: 43 units

MINOR IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Students have two tracks to choose from, depending on whether or not they took the AMS1A/1B sequence:

Track 1:
AMS 1A American Civilization I
AMS 1B American Civilization II
AMS 169 American Dream
AMS 179 American Popular Culture
AMS 190 Senior Seminar

Track 2:
HUM 101 Human Life
AMS 159 Nature and World Cultures
AMS 160 Contemporary Issues
AMS 169 American Dream
AMS 179 American Popular Culture
AMS 190 Senior Seminar
CAREERS WITH A DEGREE IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Because American Studies is broad and critical, it helps you develop key skills of value in many career paths, including the evaluation and interpretation of evidence; description, critique and analysis of complex ideas and facts; and clear communication through writing and discussion. Here are some key careers that follow nicely from a degree in American Studies (some might require additional education): law, civil service & government, non-profit and advocacy work, community organizing, social work, professional writing and journalism, business and marketing, teaching and education, and scholarly careers.

American Studies Faculty
(alphabetical)

Scot Guenter, Ph.D., Program Coordinator
Pop culture, cultural history, exilology
Jeff Danese, M.A., M.S., Lecturer
Psychology and nature
Karen English, Ph.D., Lecturer
19th century American literature, Transcendentalism
Joel Franks, Ph.D., Lecturer
Asian-American studies, sports
Judith Georges, Ph.D., Lecturer
American religious culture & women in religion
Lee Gilmore, Ph.D., Lecturer
Environmental studies, ritual, religion
Richard Keady, Ph.D., Professor
Environmentalism and spirituality
Jeanine Pfeiffer, Ph.D., Lecturer
Environmental studies and history
Todd Ormsbee, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Sexuality & LGBT studies, mass culture, theory
Dan Williamson, Ph.D., Lecturer
Ethics, philosophy of the individual in the U.S.
Marilyn Wyman, Ph.D., Lecturer
American, modern, and African art

For more information contact:
Dr. Scot Guenter, Program Coordinator
Clark Hall 420C
Phone: (408) 924-1366
Email: Scot.Guenter@sjsu.edu

Todd Ormsbee, Assistant Professor
Clark Hall 412P
Phone: (408) 924-4544

Please visit our website at:
http://www.sjsu.edu/americanstudies
Facebook:
http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=29260064778

AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

Minor in American Studies
Major in Humanities with Concentration in American Studies

American Studies Program
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA.95192-0092