

MATERIAL CULTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT CONCENTRATION, AMERICAN STUDIES (BA)

Students in this concentration study the complex interrelationships among the arts, craft, design, ideas, places, and social and cultural life in America. This concentration allows for the encyclopedic study of things in their historical context, drawing on methodologies and approaches from art and design history, economic history, history of technology, philosophy, anthropology, archaeology, and geography.

The curriculum combines two broad approaches: giving objects prime importance and placing objects in wider social and intellectual contexts. Some courses raise issues related to media, techniques, aesthetics, production and consumption, historiography, and theory, while others focus on the role objects and places play in people’s lives: the planning of cities, parks, and gardens; the design of buildings, interiors, and furnishings; clothing; jewelry and body adornment; the material culture of food, decoration, and ornament; illustration and the graphic arts. Students will explore the ways in which Americans have been shaped by and have shaped their physical environments, from “nature” to the urban environment.

Concentration Courses

Please note that the below list of possible courses is not exhaustive and that many courses listed under "TOPICS" headings may also count toward American Studies. Students may take an unlimited number of TOPICS courses, as long as the topic of each course is different.

Students must choose five courses from the following; however, exceptions may be granted by the Director of the American Studies Program. No more than three courses may be from any one department (AMS notwithstanding); at least three courses should be at the 300-level.

American Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
AMS 150	PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICAN IDENTITIES	
AMS 240	CHICAGO HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND CULTURES	
AMS 261	AMERICAN ETHNICITIES 1800-1945	
AMS 240	CHICAGO HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND CULTURES	
AMS 293	TOPICS IN AMERICAN MATERIAL CULTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
AMS 370	THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF MODERN AMERICA	
AMS 371	MATERIAL CULTURE OF EARLY AMERICA	
AMS 393	ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN MATERIAL CULTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
AMS 387	ADVANCED TOPICS IN GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES IN THE U.S./ AMERICAS ¹	

AMS 395 ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN STUDIES ¹

¹ Depending on topic.

African and Black Diaspora Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
ABD 259	THE GREAT MIGRATION AND BLACK IDENTITY	
ABD 351	RECONSTRUCTION AND THE RISE OF JIM CROW	

Anthropology

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
ANT 202	ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD METHODS	
ANT 250	MATERIAL CULTURE OF MODERN AMERICA	
ANT 252	MATERIAL CULTURE AND DOMESTIC LIFE	
ANT 254	HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF CHICAGO	
ANT 280	ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK	
ANT 314	ANTHROPOLOGY OF GENDER	
ANT 342	ANTHROPOLOGY OF FOOD MOVEMENTS AND PRACTICES	
ANT 346	URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY	
ANT 356	URBAN ETHNOGRAPHY	
ANT 358	ARCHEOLOGY OF CITIES	
ANT 374	ANTHROPOLOGY AND MUSEUMS	
ANT 378	MUSEUM EDUCATION	
ANT 382	HERITAGE DISPLAYS AND MUSEUMS	

Art

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
ART 291	MURAL PAINTING	
ART 328	DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY	

Community Service Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
CSS 310	RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRISON	
CSS 312	LAW AND POLITICS: PRISON POLICIES AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	

Environmental Science

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
ENV 165	NATIONAL PARKS HISTORY	
ENV 181	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	
ENV 200	CITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT	

Geography

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
GEO 101	ENVIRONMENTAL GEOGRAPHY	
GEO 103	URBANIZATION	
GEO 133	URBAN GEOGRAPHY - EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING	
GEO 140	MAPPING WORKSHOP FOR ONLINE STORYTELLING	
GEO 172	CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY: THE NATURE-CULTURE INTERFACE	
GEO 200	SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT	
GEO 205	RACE, JUSTICE, AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT	
GEO 206	BOUNDARIES AND IDENTITIES	
GEO 210	INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION	
GEO 231	HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF CHICAGO	
GEO 233	COMPARATIVE URBANISM	
GEO 241	GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS I: DIGITAL MAPPING	
GEO 242	GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS II: COMMUNITY GIS	
GEO 269	CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ECOLOGY	
GEO 299	KNOWLEDGE, PLACE AND POWER	
GEO 301	ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND POLITICAL TRAUMA	
GEO 339	TOPICS IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM	
GEO 350	WORLD OF WINE	
GEO 351	GEOGRAPHY, FOOD AND JUSTICE	
GEO 369	RISKS, HAZARDS AND NATURAL DISASTERS	

History of Art and Architecture

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
HAA 145	INTRODUCTION TO ARTS OF THE AMERICAS	
HAA 247	MODERN LATIN AMERICAN ART	
HAA 260	AMERICAN ART	
HAA 265	HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY	
HAA 281	MODERN ARCHITECTURE	
HAA 288	COMPARATIVE URBANISM	
HAA 291	MUSEUM AND NON-PROFIT ARTS MANAGEMENT	
HAA 371	HISTORIC CATHOLIC CHURCH ARCHITECTURE OF CHICAGO	
HAA 380	CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM (WORLD CITIES)	
HAA 391	THE EVOLVING MUSEUM: HISTORIES AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES	
HAA 394	MUSEUM STUDIES INTERNSHIP	

History

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
HST 240	HISTORY OF CHICAGO	
HST 269	MUSEUMS, MATERIAL CULTURE AND MEMORY: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HISTORY	
HST 270	U.S. HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE	
HST 280	HISTORY OF US NATIONAL PARKS	
HST 281	IDEAS OF NATURE IN US HISTORY	
HST 302	MAPS IN HISTORY AND CULTURE	
HST 382	CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM EXPERIENCE	
HST 389	TOPICS IN PUBLIC HISTORY	
HST 391	DOING LOCAL AND COMMUNITY HISTORY	
HST 392	PUBLIC HISTORY INTERNSHIP	

International Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
INT 150	GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE	
INT 201	NATION STATES, NATIONALISM, EMPIRE	
INT 206	IDENTITIES AND BOUNDARIES	
INT 308	NATURE, SOCIETY AND POWER	
INT 316	THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE OF OIL	
INT 317	READING MARX'S CAPITAL	

Media and Cinema Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
MPOP 342	HISTORY OF TELEVISION & RADIO	
MPOP 344	THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION: HOLLYWOOD IN THE 1960S	
MPOP 355	SEX IN THE BOX: U.S. TELEVISION, SEX, AND SEXUALITY	

Political Science

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
PSC 201	GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS	
PSC 223	URBAN POLITICS	

Public Policy Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
PPS 201	PUBLIC POLICY AND URBAN ISSUES	
PPS 231	ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	
PPS 250	ISSUES IN NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT	
PPS 251	URBAN POVERTY	
PPS 255	CITIES, GLOBALIZATION AND PUBLIC POLICY	
PPS 330	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	
PPS 332	NATIONAL PARKS POLICY AND GOVERNANCE	

PPS 333	GREEN CITIES
PPS 350	ISSUES IN URBAN REDEVELOPMENT
PPS 351	THE POLICY AND POLITICS OF URBAN HOUSING
PPS 360	GREAT LAKES GOVERNANCE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
PPS 361	PUBLIC SPACES AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Sociology

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
SOC 231	RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE CITY	
SOC 232	GLOBAL CITIES	
SOC 245	URBAN SOCIOLOGY	
SOC 246	HOMELESS IN THE CITY	
SOC 316	STREET GANGS	
SOC 346	URBAN ETHNOGRAPHY	
SOC 347	CLASS, POWER AND DECISION MAKING IN THE CITY	

Portfolio Requirement

Students are encouraged to maintain an active record of documents from their concentration courses, including syllabi, completed written course work, collections of visuals, e.g., photo essays – whatever is appropriate to the six courses chosen for the concentration. Students will use these documents to aid them in writing reflective essays during the initial weeks of their senior seminar. These essays might ask you to consider “What were the course’s most valuable lessons in research, analysis, writing and communication? How did this course, taken together with the other courses you have chosen for your concentration, influence/develop your understanding of the area of American culture on which you are focusing?” These essays, along with representative assignments, will form the student’s American Studies “portfolio.” Students turn in their portfolio on the concentration, along with a proposal for the senior seminar project, in the first weeks of the senior seminar, AMS 301. Specific directions for the portfolio can be obtained from your American Studies advisor, from the American Studies Program office, or from the American Studies Program Director.

Open Electives

Open elective credit also is required to meet the minimum graduation requirement of 192 hours.