

POPULAR CULTURE AND MEDIA STUDIES CONCENTRATION, AMERICAN STUDIES (BA)

The Popular Culture and Media Studies concentration in American Studies offers students an opportunity to explore the rich and complex role popular culture has played and continues to play in American life. In contrast to high culture or folk culture forms, "popular culture" generally refers to those commercialized leisure activities or arts that are broadly accessible to most Americans, either through their mass media production (music, radio, film, television, novels, newspapers, magazines, fashion) or wide availability (amusement parks, concerts, sports, Broadway shows, shopping malls, internet sites). Since the end of the nineteenth century, American culture has been defined through its popular arts, most obviously Hollywood films and television programs, and American popular culture and media products have had enormous effects on American identity.

Four broad sets of questions underpin our examination of American popular culture and media. First, what does our close examination of the formal elements of cultural products - their written and visual texts, their physical shapes and sounds - tell us about their specific cultural effects and meanings, both during the historical period in which they were produced and in the present? Second, how does examining the development processes and industrial histories of cultural products help us better understand their political, economic, technological, and social implications? Third, what does the reception of these products by audiences, either through live performances or mass media, tell us about their impact on the formation of American identities (gender, racial, sexual), values, and opinions? Finally, how does studying the history of American popular culture help us critically assess our current cultural politics and the role American popular culture continues to play in our understanding of ourselves as individuals, as members of social groups, and as national and international citizens?

In this concentration, students integrate courses from a number of disciplines, combining those that offer broad surveys of cultural development as well as close examinations of particular cultural products; students should also look for courses that offer a variety of methodological approaches to studying American popular culture. Please note that courses in the Media and Popular Culture Major (MPOP) in the College of Communication will likely always count for this Concentration if they are at least 50% U.S.-based. AMS shared many courses in common with the MPOP major.

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 202	UNITED STATES POPULAR MUSIC HISTORY	
AMS 205	INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR CULTURE	
AMS 250	IN THEIR OWN VOICES: AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY	
AMS 276	HISTORY OF SEX IN AMERICA 2: LATE VICTORIANS TO THE PRESENT	
AMS 285	HISTORY AND U.S. POPULAR MEDIA	
AMS 296	TOPICS IN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE AND MEDIA	
AMS 340	AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE: 1840S-1940S	
AMS 352	SEX, GENDER AND SOCIAL MEDIA	
AMS 360	AMERICAN FILM	
AMS 380	TELEVISION AND AMERICAN IDENTITY	
AMS 386	ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE AND MEDIA	
AMS 387	ADVANCED TOPICS IN GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES IN THE U.S./ AMERICAS	

African & Black Diaspora Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
ABD 234	BLACK AESTHETIC THOUGHT	
ABD 235	HARLEM RENAISSANCE AND NEGRITUDE	
ABD 240	BLACK MUSIC IN AMERICAN CULTURE	
ABD 244	AFRICAN DIASPORA WOMEN WRITERS	
ABD 249	JAZZ AND THE DIASPORIC IMAGINATION	
ABD 261	RADICAL AESTHETICS OF HIP HOP	
ABD 262	WHAT IS BLACK CINEMA?	
ABD 320	AFRICAN AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION	
ABD 371	AFRICAN- AMERICAN FICTION	
ABD 372	AFRICAN AMERICAN DRAMA AND POETRY	
ABD 374	THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT	
ABD 375	RACE, MEDIA, AND REPRESENTATION	

Anthropology

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
ANT 250	MATERIAL CULTURE OF MODERN AMERICA	

Asian American Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
AAS 203	ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS AND CULTURE	

Communication and Communication Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
CMN 102	INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION	
CMNS 230	PERFORMANCE: COMMUNICATION, CREATIVITY AND THE BODY	
CMNS 301	AUDIO DOCUMENTARY	
CMNS 305	PERFORMANCE STUDIES	
CMNS 308	TOPICS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION	
CMNS 326	ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND RHETORIC	
CMNS 339	PERFORMANCE OF GENDER & SEXUALITY	
CMNS 367	PERFORMANCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE	
CMNS 369	PERFORMANCE OF HUMOR	

Critical Ethnic Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
CES 405	RACE AND THE MEDIA	

English

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
ENG 236	GRAPHIC NOVELS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	
ENG 265	THE AMERICAN NOVEL	
ENG 271	AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE	
ENG 276	LATINX LITERATURE	
ENG 285	LGBTQ LITERATURE	
ENG 335	TOPICS IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE	
ENG 345	TOPICS IN 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE	
ENG 360	AMERICAN LITERATURE TO 1830	
ENG 361	19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE	
ENG 362	AMERICAN LITERATURE FROM 1865 TO 1920	
ENG 363	AMERICAN LITERATURE AFTER 1900	
ENG 364	TOPICS IN GENRE STUDIES	
ENG 365	TOPICS IN 20TH-CENTURY FICTION	
ENG 367	TOPICS IN AMERICAN STUDIES	
ENG 369	TOPICS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE	
ENG 371	TOPICS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE	
ENG 373	MULTIETHNIC LITERATURE OF THE U.S.	
ENG 374	NATIVE LITERATURE	
ENG 381	LITERARY THEORY	
ENG 384	TOPICS IN LATINX LITERATURE	
ENG 385	TOPICS IN LGBTQ LITERATURE	

History of Art and Architecture

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
HAA 260	AMERICAN ART	
HAA 265	HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY	

History

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
HST 295	AMERICAN HISTORY AND FILM/TV	
HST 381	AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE 1890s-1930s ¹	

Intercultural Communication

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
CMNS 230	PERFORMANCE: COMMUNICATION, CREATIVITY AND THE BODY	
CMNS 324	CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION	

Journalism

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
JOUR 343	JOURNALISM AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE	
JOUR 361	JOURNALISM LAW AND ETHICS	

Media & Cinema Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
MPOP 207	HISTORY OF CINEMA I, 1890-1945	
MPOP 208	HISTORY OF CINEMA II, 1945-1975	
MPOP 209	HISTORY OF CINEMA III, 1975-PRESENT	
MPOP 271	MEDIA AND CULTURAL STUDIES	
MPOP 273	STORYTELLING & STYLE IN CINEMA	
MPOP 342	HISTORY OF TELEVISION & RADIO	
MPOP 343	MEDIA ETHICS	
MPOP 344	THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION: HOLLYWOOD IN THE 1960S	
MPOP 351	TOPICS IN TELEVISION STUDIES	
MPOP 355	SEX IN THE BOX: U.S. TELEVISION, SEX, AND SEXUALITY	
MPOP 361	FANDOM & PARTICIPATORY CULTURE	
MPOP 366	COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY	
MPOP 383	TALKING ABOUT FILM: THEORY & CRITICISM	

Public Relations & Advertising

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
PRAD 244	PRINCIPLES OF ADVERTISING	
PRAD 333	HUMOR AND ADVERTISING	
PRAD 335	DIVERSITY & CURRENT ISSUES IN ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	

Political Science

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
PSC 321	MASS MEDIA AND AMERICAN POLITICS	
PSC 327	PUBLIC OPINION	

Religion

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
REL 212	RELIGION AND POPULAR CULTURE ¹	

Sociology

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
SOC 233	SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT	
SOC 280	MASS MEDIA AND CULTURE	
SOC 281	SOCIOLOGY OF ROCK MUSIC	
SOC 383	VISUAL SOCIOLOGY	
SOC 386	POPULAR CULTURE AND THE ARTS	
SOC 387	SOCIOLOGY OF CELEBRITY	

Theater

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
ACT 100	POLITICS, POP CULTURE, AND THE STAGE	

Women's and Gender Studies

Course	Title	Quarter Hours
WGS 255	DECONSTRUCTING THE DIVA	

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.