INTRODUCTION

American Studies gives students a thorough understanding of the past and present nature of American culture and society. Three central features of our approach are: (1) an emphasis on the analysis of culture – that shared system of beliefs, behaviors, symbols and material objects through which Americans give meaning to their lives; (2) examination of dominant culture patterns, as well as the diversity of cultures in America; and (3) an interdisciplinary perspective that uses both the social sciences and humanities.

Besides providing a rich liberal arts education, training in the major develops skills in writing and analysis, and strengthens the ability to recognize connections among complex materials and diverse phenomena. American studies graduates enter careers in business, communications, government service, law, social services and teaching. The major is also a fine background for graduate work in the field or in related fields.

LEARNING GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Bachelor's Degree

The following learning goals and learning outcomes have been established for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree in American Studies:

Interdisciplinary Sensibility

- Develop a rigorous concept of culture and cultural process as well as an interdisciplinary sensibility, becoming aware of connections among the social sciences and the humanities
- Develop an interdisciplinary interpretive framework for studying American culture, cultural diversity, and cultural processes in ways that will enable students to solve practical and theoretical problems
- Have a working knowledge of the history of the field of American studies—its theories, methods, and intellectual justifications

Cultural Diversity

- Gain a thorough understanding of cultural diversity by examining the creative tension between unity and multiplicity in American experiences
- Identify a variety of examples of cultural diversity and commonality in America’s past and present, demonstrating an awareness of the similarities, differences and relationships among the multitude of American groups
- Explain how categories of difference — including race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality — are culturally constructed and vary according to historical, regional and social contexts
- Understand and demonstrate how cultural beliefs and practices have played a role in both the exercise of and resistance to power throughout American history
- Understand and interpret the ways in which culture creates meaning and guides behavior
Interpreting American Culture
- Critically analyze and interpret a spectrum of cultural documents and expressive forms, ranging from popular to folk to elite expressions, from mass media to material culture
- Employ both historical and contemporary perspectives in order to situate these documents in relevant individual and social as well as local, national and global contexts

Research, Writing and Expressive Skills
- Learn research, writing and expressive skills to see connections among complex materials and to clearly communicate an understanding of the underlying meanings and causes of cultural/historical events
- Design and carry out an original interdisciplinary research project on American culture
- Discover primary and secondary sources (hard copy as well as digital) using the library’s resources
- Analyze and synthesize material from primary and secondary sources in order to create a coherent argument based on evidence
- Develop an original thesis and support that thesis through the thoughtful use of a variety of properly cited sources
- Communicate their research findings through clear, well-organized written and oral presentations
- Develop critical thinking, writing and interpretive skills

Social Issues and Cultural Contexts
- Become informed and engaged American citizens, able to situate current political and social issues within their historical and cultural contexts
- Understand the historical origins and cultural significance of current movements for social change
- Situate the historical and contemporary study of American culture in a global context, demonstrating an understanding of the ways American culture has been shaped by diaspora, colonialism and globalization

Master’s Degree
The following learning goals and learning outcomes have been established for students pursuing a master’s degree in American Studies:

Interdisciplinary Sensibility
- Develop a rigorous concept of culture and cultural process, as well as an interdisciplinary sensibility, demonstrating an advanced understanding of connections among the social sciences and the humanities
- Develop an advanced interdisciplinary interpretive framework for studying American culture, cultural diversity and cultural processes in ways that will enable students to solve practical and theoretical problems
- Have an advanced knowledge of the history of the field of American Studies – and of at least one outside disciplinary field
- Develop an advanced understanding of the theoretical and methodological approaches used in American Studies and interdisciplinary scholarship

Cultural Diversity
- Gain a thorough understanding of cultural diversity by examining the creative tension between unity and multiplicity in American experiences
- Indentify a variety of examples of cultural diversity and commonality in America’s past and present, demonstrating an advanced understanding of the similarities, differences and relationships among the multitude of American groups
- Explain how categories of difference – including race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality – are culturally constructed and vary according to historical, regional and social contexts
- Understand and demonstrate how cultural beliefs and practices have played a role in both the exercise of and resistance to power throughout American history
- Articulate a critical awareness of the conceptual approaches to the study of cultural diversity

Interpreting American Culture
- Understand and interpret the ways in which culture creates meaning and guides behavior
- Critically analyze and interpret a spectrum of cultural documents and expressive forms, ranging from popular to folk to elite expressions; from mass media to material culture
- Employ both historical and contemporary perspectives in order to situate these documents in relevant individual and social, as well as local, national and global contexts
- Develop an advanced understanding of the theoretical approaches to the study of culture

Research, Writing and Expressive Skills
- Demonstrate advanced research, writing and expressive skills to see connections among complex materials and to clearly communicate an understanding of the underlying meanings and causes of cultural/historical events
- Design and carry out original interdisciplinary research projects on American culture
- Discover primary and secondary sources (hard copy, as well as digital) using the library’s resources
- Analyze and synthesize material from primary and secondary sources in order to create a coherent argument based on evidence
- Develop an original thesis and support that thesis through the thoughtful use of a variety of properly cited sources
- Communicate research findings through clear, well-organized written and oral presentations
• Develop advanced critical thinking, writing and interpretive skills
• Develop the ability to adhere to scholarly conventions in research, writing and documentation

Social Issues and Cultural Contexts
• Become informed and engaged American citizens able to situate current political and social issues within their historical and cultural contexts
• Develop an advanced understanding of the historical origins and cultural significance of current movements for social change
• Situate the historical and contemporary study of American culture in a global context, demonstrating an understanding of the ways American culture has been shaped by Diaspora, colonialism and globalization

TEACHING CREDENTIAL
Because American Studies is interdisciplinary, the major may be effectively combined with subject matter studies necessary for either the multiple subject teaching credential (K-8) or single subject credential (7-12) in History/Social Science. Undergraduates are encouraged to work with the Center for Careers in Teaching (657-278-7130) as early as possible in their academic careers to plan efficient course selections for general education, the major and electives. With careful planning, it may be possible to enter the credential program in the senior year of the bachelor’s degree. Postgraduate students should contact the Admission to Teacher Education office in the College of Education (657-278-3352) to obtain information on attending an overview presentation.

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN AMERICAN STUDIES (120 UNITS)
The Bachelor of Arts in American Studies requires 36 units in the major: 12 units in the core program and 24 units of electives following either Plan A or B.

Core Courses (12 units)
AMST 201 Introduction to American Studies (3)
AMST 301 American Character (3)
AMST 350 Seminar in Theory and Method of American Studies (3)
AMST 401T Proseminar in American Studies (3)

Electives (24 upper-division units)
Elective coursework must be approved by the major adviser following either Plan A or B:

Plan A
Students may take all eight electives in American Studies courses or they may include up to four courses from no more than two other departments, such as African American studies, anthropology, Asian American studies, Chicana/o studies, communications, criminal justice, English, history, geography, political science, psychology or sociology.

Plan B
Coursework pursuing a particular theme or subject, such as: law and society, sex roles, the visual arts, ethnicity, urbanization, regionalism, the child and the family, or popular culture.

DOUBLE MAJOR IN AMERICAN STUDIES
A double major in American Studies is often simple to arrange, since it allows for up to 12 units of coursework in the department of the other major to be used to complete the requirements of our major.

MINOR IN AMERICAN STUDIES (21 UNITS)
The minor in American Studies requires: AMST 201, 301 or 345, and 401T, plus 12 units of electives. Six units may be lower-division and three units may be taken in a related department upon approval of an American Studies Department adviser.

MASTER OF ARTS IN AMERICAN STUDIES (30 UNITS)
The M.A. in American Studies program is interdisciplinary, requiring graduate students to integrate knowledge from the humanities and social sciences. Particular areas of faculty specialization within the department include: gender and sexuality; race, class and ethnicity; literature, film, art and architecture as cultural expression; American regions; popular culture; cultural radicalism; ethnography; globalization; and the environment.

Application Deadlines
Applications are accepted only for the fall semester. Online applications must be completed by March 1 for the following fall semester (see csumentor.edu); mailed applications must be postmarked by the same date. However, deadlines may be changed based upon enrollment projections.

Admission to Graduate Standing – Conditionally Classified
Students must meet the CSU requirements for admission to a master’s degree program. Please consult the Graduate Admissions section in this catalog for complete information. In addition, applicants must: (1) hold a bachelor’s degree with a major, or its equivalent, in American studies or in an appropriate discipline of the humanities or social sciences; (2) have a grade-point average of at least 3.2 in upper-division major courses; and (3) submit two satisfactory letters of recommendation from instructors in upper-division major courses.

Students whose undergraduate program indicates certain limited subject, grade or breadth deficiencies may be considered for admission, at the discretion of the graduate adviser, with approval of the department’s graduate committee. In such cases, a student must make up deficiencies, in consultation with the graduate adviser, and must complete all required courses with at least a “B” (3.0) average before classified graduate standing may be considered.

Graduate Standing – Classified
Students will be classified upon fulfillment of the above prerequisites and after development of an approved study plan.
STUDY PLAN
American Studies (21 units)

Required courses
AMST 501 Theory and Methods (3)
AMST 502T Seminar: Selected Topics (3) (May be repeated for credit with different topic)

Electives
Additional upper-division or graduate level coursework in American studies (12)

Choose one of the following:
AMST 598 Thesis (3) should be taken in the semester immediately preceding graduation from the program
An additional American Studies graduate level elective, i.e., AMST 599 or 502T, plus successful completion of a three-part take home comprehensive examination based on the department's core reading list

Other Disciplines (6 units)
Graduate-level seminars in anthropology, art, communications, comparative literature, English, geography, history, political science or sociology. Pedagogical and productions skill seminars are excluded. Students should select outside discipline seminars in consultation with the graduate advisor.

Elective Skill (3 units)
A student must demonstrate proficiency in a methodological skill appropriate to his or her scholarly interests. In consultation with an adviser, the student will select the skill to be developed. Proficiency in a foreign language or quantitative methods, or an internship in a related area, would, for example, be appropriate. If prerequisite work is necessary before a student can develop proficiency through three units of coursework, that preliminary work will not be counted toward the 30 units required for the M.A. degree.

For further information, consult graduate program adviser.

AMERICAN STUDIES COURSES
Courses are designated as AMST in the class schedule.

101 Introduction to American Culture Studies (3)
Concepts of interdisciplinary culture studies, focusing on analysis of cultural change in complex, literate society. American culture, including cross-cultural comparisons. Popular culture, subcultures, regionalism, myths and symbols, and culture and personality. One or more sections offered online.

201 Introduction to American Studies (3)
With the concept of culture as a unifying principle, focus is on four separate time periods in order to provide the framework for an understanding of American civilization. Several different kinds of documents will be used to illustrate the nature and advantages of an interdisciplinary approach.

300 Introduction to American Popular Culture (3)
Prerequisite: completion of General Education (G.E.) Category D.1. Historical exploration of popular culture in America as it both reflects and contributes to the search for meaning in everyday life. Heroes, myths of success, symbols of power, images of romance, consumerism, race and sexual identity. One or more sections offered online.

301 American Character (3)
Prerequisite: completion of the G.E. Category D.1. Cultural environment and personality. Extent to which there have been and continue to be distinctly American patterns of belief and behavior. Similarities, as well as class, ethnic, sex and regional differences among Americans. One or more sections offered online.

312 Multicultural Identities and Women's Experience (3)
Diversity of women's experiences, focusing on both historical and contemporary analysis of African American, Asian American, Latina and white ethnic women. Course materials include autobiography, fiction, visual and popular arts, and feminist cultural criticism. (Same as WMST 312)

318 Hollywood and America: Using Film as a Cultural Document (3)
Hollywood as a cultural institution. Concentrating on films of selected periods, the course analyzes Hollywood's ability to create and transmit symbols and myths, and legitimize new values and patterns of behavior.

320 Women in American Society (3)

345 The American Dream (3)
Interdisciplinary analysis, in settings both historical and contemporary, of the myth and reality surrounding the notion of America as a land of unparalleled and unlimited possibilities, especially in the achievement of personal material success.

346 American Culture Through Spectator Sports (3)
Shifting meaning of organized sports in changing American society. Includes analysis of sports rituals, symbols and heroes. Cultural significance of amateur and professional football, baseball and basketball.

350 Seminar in Theory and Method of American Studies (3)
Prerequisites: AMST 201, 301. Understanding and appreciation of methodology, theories of society and images of humanity as they affect American studies contributions to scholarship. Fulfills course requirement of the university upper-division baccalaureate writing requirement for American studies majors.
377 Prejudice and American Culture (3)
Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. Concepts and methods of American culture studies as tools for better understanding the origins and appeal of intolerance, past and present. Particular focus on racism, ethnic and religious bias, sexism and homophobia.

395 California Cultures (3)
Prerequisite: completion of G.E. Category D.1. How various cultures – Native American, European, Latino, Asian, African-American – have interacted in California’s past and present. Cultural diversity in frontiers and borderlands; shifting meanings of gender; function of regional and racial myths.

401T Proseminar in American Studies (3)
Prerequisites: AMST 201, 301. Relationship between theory and application. Analytic readings and research. Check the class schedule for topics being considered. May be repeated for credit.

402 Religion and American Culture (3)
Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. Interdisciplinary analysis of the religious dimensions of American core culture from colonial settlement to the present. Puritanism; rationalization, secularization and feminization; the conversion experience, revivalism and revitalization; fundamentalism and modernism; and civil religion.

404 Americans and Nature (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Examines shifting attitudes toward the natural environment among a range of Americans over time, from native inhabitants and early colonists to rural and urban dwellers today. Topics include agrarian expansion, industrialization, transcendentalism, tourism, humans’ roles in “natural” disasters and the history of environmental activism.

405 Images of Crime and Violence in American Culture (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Cultural analysis of meanings ascribed to law and order, authority, violence and punishment in the American past and present. Examined in selected symbols, images, traditions and realities.

407 American Humor (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Cultural significance of various types of American humor in past and present settings. How humor reinforces existing culture and also serves as an index and agent of cultural change. Humor’s relationship to ethnicity, region, social class and sex.

409 Consumer Culture (3)
Prerequisite: completion of G.E. Category D.3. Consumerism in America, from the Boston Tea Party to today, from an interdisciplinary perspective using literature, music, clothing, advertisements and consumer-based social movements to analyze the power of consumer culture.

410 The Office: White-Collar Work in American Culture (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion on G.E. Category D.3. Interdisciplinary exploration of history and culture of white-collar work through film, television, novels, ethnographies and historical works. Topics include: work and identity; gender, race and corporate hierarchy; work/life balance; corporate ethics; flexible work arrangements; and layoffs.

413 The Shifting Role and Image of the American Male (3)
Effect of economic, social, political and cultural changes on American males. Emphasizes 19th and 20th centuries.

416 Southern California Culture: A Study of American Regionalism (3)
Regionalism as a concept and as a fact of American life. Theories of regionalism measured against a study of Southern California and one other distinct American region.

419 Love in America (3)
Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. Changes in the emotional lives of American men and women from the 17th century to the present. Enduring and innovative views on the nature of love and the cultural forces that shape its “legitimate” and “illegitimate” expression.

420 Childhood and Family in American Culture (3)
Historical and contemporary culture study of childhood and family in America. Idea of childhood, changing concepts of child-rearing, growing up in the American past, the impact of modernization, mother and home as dominant cultural symbols.

423 The Search for Community (3)
Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. Historical transformation and modern reformulation of community in America. Relationship of the individual to the larger social group. Freedom, need to belong, alienation and search for identity.

433 Visual Arts in Contemporary America (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Visual phenomena in America as they reveal changes in recent American culture. The “high” arts (painting, sculpture) as contrasted with the “low” arts (advertising, television); the artist as innovator; alienation; the business world; and American values in art.

438 American Minds: Images of Sickness and Health (3)
Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. Historically explores cultural changes in American images of the healthy mind. Medical and legal views of insanity, Freud’s impact on American thought, literary treatments of madness, and psychological themes in American popular culture.

439 American Photographs as Cultural Evidence (3)
Prerequisites: junior or senior standing and AMST 201. Cultural work of American photography, from the mid-19th century to the present. How photographs – especially the vernacular or everyday variety – have both reflected and shaped American beliefs, symbols and values.
440 American Folk Culture (3)
Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. American culture from the perspectives of particular folk groups and through the eyes of the "common" person, past and present. Interpretation of artifacts and oral traditions; relationships between regional, ethnic, and folk identity; modernization and folk consciousness.

442 Television and American Culture (3)
Prerequisite: completion of G.E. Category D.3. American television as an interactive form of cultural expression, both product and producer of cultural knowledge. Structure and content of television genres, and social-historical context of television's development and use, audience response, habits and environments of viewing.

444 The Built Environment (3)
Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. How Americans have shaped and structured space from the 17th century to the present. Relationship between space, place, architecture and material culture; the interpretation of cultural landscapes and architectural styles; the changing meanings of the American home.

445 Cold War and American Culture (3)
Prerequisite: completion of G.E. Category D.3. The Cold War's impact on American society and culture. Nuclear fear, McCarthyism, gender roles, family life, material culture, and the impact of containment, brinkmanship and détente.

447 Race and American Popular Culture (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Examines literature, theater, sport, music and film, and asks: how has popular culture contributed to and challenged the social construction of race and ethnicity in the United States?

449 The American West in Symbol and Myth (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Meaning of the West to American culture through analysis of cultural documents, such as explorer and captivity narratives, fiction, art and film. Perception of wilderness, Indians, frontiersmen and role of the West in creating a sexist national mythology.

460 Bohemians and Beats: Cultural Radicalism in America (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of the G.E. Category D.3. Ideas, activities and legacies of the creators of a "countercultural" tradition in the 19th and 20th centuries. Their critique of modern civilization, as well as their projects for self-transformation, social change and cultural renewal.

465 The Culture of the American South (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Distinctive cultural patterns in the American South, past and present. Southern concepts of work and leisure; race and gender roles; political and religious controversies; literature and folklore; and the South as portrayed in the media.

468 Culture in Turmoil: 1960s America (3)
Prerequisite: junior or senior standing. Origins, manifestations and continuing significance of the turbulence in American culture associated with the 1960s. Accelerated changes that occurred (or seemed to occur) in cultural meanings of authority, achievement, patriotism, sexuality, technology and consciousness.

473 Sexual Orientations and American Culture (3)
Prerequisites: junior or senior standing, AMST 201. Cultural construction of the very idea of a sexual orientation. Shifting meanings of erotic attraction and involvement in America, especially regarding people of the same sex, from the colonial period to the present.

476 The Cultures of Early America (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Explores America's various cultures and, through an analysis of visual, material and print culture, investigates the beliefs, ideologies and institutions through which early Americans created their worlds. Examines contemporary public memory of early America.

488 Race, Sex and American Urban Culture (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 201 or completion of G.E. Category D.3. Major urban spaces at key moments in the 19th and 20th centuries; ways that anxieties about race, gender, youth and sexuality have come to be identified with urban spaces and modern city life.

499 Independent Study (1-3)
Supervised research projects in American studies to be taken with the consent of instructor and department chair. May be repeated for credit.

501 Theory and Methods (3)
The American Studies movement. Its conceptual and methodological development. The way this development was affected by and in turn reflected larger trends in the culture itself.

502T Seminar: Selected Topics (3)
A particular problem or topic as a case study in the use of interdisciplinary methods in American studies. May be repeated for credit.

596 American Studies Teaching Tutorial (3)
Prerequisite: AMST 501. Preparation for community college or university teaching. Small group discussion, lecture-discussion, examinations, teaching strategies. Enrollment requires approval of American Studies graduate coordinator. Course may be repeated for credit, but may only count once on a graduate study plan.

598 Thesis (3)
Prerequisites: graduate standing in American studies and consent of graduate coordinator. Writing a thesis based on original research and its analysis and evaluation.

599 Independent Graduate Research (1-3)
Prerequisites: graduate standing in American studies and consent of graduate coordinator. May be repeated for credit.