

## SECTION 5: MASTER OF ARTS IN AMERICAN STUDIES

American Studies is an interdisciplinary field approximately 85 years old. Its purpose is to provide students with an integrated and critical knowledge of American culture and society by drawing upon such disciplines as agriculture, history, political science, English, sociology, mass communication, theatre, and education to foster a holistic understanding of the historical, social, and cultural underpinnings of the American experience. This approach also allows students to appreciate what is both exceptional and universal about the United States. Unlike other American Studies programs, NWOSU's is unique by using regional issues as a springboard to understanding national issues. Hence, nine hours of the program's core courses deal with Oklahoma and the American West while three hours deal with leadership issues in northwest Oklahoma. Sixteen subsequent hours of electives are available for students to focus on larger national issues that meet their individual interests and career goals. Three hours of research and five hours in applied methodology round out the curriculum to provide students with an understanding of the ways in which the northwestern Oklahoma region influences national American culture and vice versa.

### OBJECTIVES

The Master of Arts in American Studies program incorporate the following student learning outcomes (SLOs):

1. Enabling students to explore and interpret the American experience from an interdisciplinary perspective that encompasses the fields of agriculture, history, political science, English, sociology, mass communication, theatre, and education.
2. Providing students with research skills and theoretical methodologies through which they will foster an integrative approach to learning about American culture and society, both past and present.
3. Providing students with an intimate knowledge of northwestern Oklahoma and the American West through which they will learn about the culture of the United States, understanding the ways in which regional issues affect the national culture and vice versa.
4. Helping students to achieve excellence in critical thinking through extensive writing, reading, research, and communication with peers, faculty, and community members.
5. Enabling students to initiate, develop, and carry out independent enquiry that will allow them to energize the region culturally and economically through leadership positions.
6. Preparing students for a wide range of employment opportunities by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and ethics that can be applied toward work in schools, junior colleges, archives, museums, galleries, media organizations, and in governmental, commercial, and cultural agencies.

### UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**Residency Requirement.** A minimum of twenty-three semester hours, including the final eight hours, must be earned in residence at Northwestern Oklahoma State University. The remainder of the candidate's program (nine hours maximum) may be earned at other accredited institutions. These hours, or any part thereof, may be applied to the program only if, in the judgment of the student's graduate advisory committee and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, they contribute to the student's overall program.

**Graduate Advisory Committee.** An advisory committee is selected by each student in the American Studies program. The committee is responsible for assisting the student in planning a program of study, to compile the comprehensive exam essay questions, and to conduct the oral defense. The advisory committee shall consist of three members of the American Studies faculty (see [www.nwosu.edu/graduate-studies/american-studies](http://www.nwosu.edu/graduate-studies/american-studies) for the list of faculty members). The committee chair must hold a terminal degree. Members' consent to serve and the approval of the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies is required. *Students are required to select their graduate advisory committee and meet with its members during their first semester of coursework.*

### CAREERS

**Job Outlook.** According to the U.S. Bureau for Labor Statistics and the American Studies Association, employment for graduates with an American Studies background is expected to increase faster than average over the next five years. Competition for jobs as archivists, curators, museum technicians, and other service positions within these areas are expected to be strong. Employment in career areas such as public relations, sales, and marketing will be increasing at a similar rate. Students with computer and visual documentation skills have excellent job prospects. Such positions as archivists, public relation specialists, college professors, and youth programs manager are also expected to grow anywhere between 8% and 28%. The greatest value of the American Studies program is exposure to critical thinking in diverse academic disciplines that will help in a diverse number of occupational areas.

**Career Opportunities.** The American Studies program provides students interested in American culture, society, and history the opportunity to apply their background to a variety of professions in many career settings. Graduates of the American Studies program may prepare for careers in museums, government, law, communication, or higher education. Many business organizations have positions requiring American Studies backgrounds for public relations, art management, and tourism. Communication fields are another example of potential opportunity. Public sector jobs, government agencies, and publicly-supported institutions often seek American Studies graduates as interpreters, explaining an agency's or institution's function, projects, activities, or history to the public.

**Job Settings.** A graduate of American Studies can explore opportunities within archives, art museums, art management, business, the CIA/FBI, cultural organizations, consulting firms, colleges and universities, Department of Justice, discovery museums, foundations, historic sites, insurance companies, living history museums, galleries, government, historical societies, law, magazine writing/publishing, national parks, national history museums, Peace Corps/Americorps, political organizations, research firms, and tourism.

**Job Titles.** The following are some examples of common job titles for American Studies graduates: Archivist, Business Affairs Director, Collections Manager, Community Relations Director, Curator, Development Director, Educational Programs Director, Historian, Historic Preservation Specialist, Lobbyist, Market Research Analyst, Membership Coordinator, Museum Curator, Public Administrator, etc.

## CURRICULUM FOR THE AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

The curriculum for the M.A. in American Studies degree consists of two components: required core courses and electives.

### ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Coursework for the degree is interdisciplinary and makes up a 35 hour program. Degree requirements are listed below.

#### REQUIRED CORE COURSES

1. EDUC 5010 Graduate Study Seminar (required of all graduate students at the start of their first semester)
2. **Research (3 hours)** (*Prerequisite: AMST 5103/Introduction to American Studies or director permission*)  
HIST 5433 Historical Methods  
AMST 5113 Interdisciplinary Research in American Studies
3. **Methodologies (5 hours)**  
AMST 5103 Introduction to American Studies  
*Choose one of the following:*  
HIST 5402 Historic Preservation  
HIST 5412 Museum Studies  
HIST 5422 Public History
3. **Regional History and Issues (choose 9 hours)**  
ENGL 5413 Popular Literature (when taught as Popular Literature: The Western)  
HIST 5123 Oklahoma History and Government  
HIST 5203 The American West  
SOC 5133 Rural Sociology  
SOC 5123 Social Gerontology
4. **Leadership (3 hours)**  
*Choose one of the following:*  
SOC 5263 Public Service Leadership  
AMST 5153 Studies in American Political Culture

#### ELECTIVES (National Histories, Issues, and Perspectives)

**Choose 15 hours from at least three of the following areas (15 hours)**

- AGRI 5153 Agricultural Economics of Development
- EDUC 5763 Public School Finance
- EDUC 5903 Higher Education Philosophy and Practice
- EDUC 5943 Leadership in Adult Education Venues
- EDUC 5953 Institutional Management
- ENGL 5203 Contemporary Poetry
- ENGL 5213 Nonfiction Prose
- ENGL 5273 20th and 21st Century American Novel
- ENGL 5433 Nineteenth Century American Novel
- ENGL 5463 American Literature
- HIST 5113 U.S. Diplomatic History
- HIST 5213 American Colonial Period
- HIST 5223 The United States: 1783-1840
- HIST 5233 The United States: 1841-1877
- HIST 5313 The United States: 1933-Present
- HIST 5603 U. S. Economic History
- HIST 5613 Native American History
- HIST 5623 The United States: 1877-1932
- HIST 5663 Survey of Latin American History
- HIST 5723 African American History
- MCOM 5113 Mass Communication Law and Ethics (offered only on the Alva campus)
- MCOM 5123 Advanced Strategic Communication (offered only on the Alva campus)
- MCOM 5213 Business and Professional Communication (offered only on the Alva campus)
- POLS 5113 Constitutional Studies
- POLS 5123 Advanced Political Theory

POLS 5173 U. S. Foreign Policy  
POLS 5213 Public Policy Studies  
POLS 5223 Elements of Public Administration  
POLS 5253 Federal, State, and Local Relations  
POLS 5303 The Federal Legislative Branch  
POLS 5313 The Federal Executive Branch

SOC 5113 Cultural Anthropology  
SOC 5203 Social Theory

TCOM 5423 Principles of Directing (*available only when student directs a play by an American author*)  
TCOM 5443 Theatre Pedagogy  
TCOM 5733 History of Musical Theatre  
TCOM 5862 Children's Theatre (SL) (*available only when student directs/produces a play by an American author*)

5330 Thesis (from 3 to 6 hours)

AMST 5500 Internship (from 3 to 6 hours)

Students may take a maximum of six credit hours in any combination of Individual Study (5170), Seminar (5190), and/or short courses (5300) as elective options with permission of their graduate advisory committee.

**Any elective chosen that does not come from the list above must be approved by the student's graduate advisory committee by signing the student's plan of study form before enrollment in that course can occur.**

**All American Studies students must form their graduate advisory committee and meet with its members during the first semester of course work.**