

# American studies

Convener: Dr David Goodman (History)

The American studies program is coordinated by the Department of History, one of the leading history departments in Australia. The importance of the United States in the contemporary world and the richness and diversity of American scholarship make American studies a stimulating and practical choice for many students. The program provides students with an interdisciplinary perspective on American society, culture, history and politics. Students have the opportunity to enrich their academic experience by studying on location in Boston and New York with the popular subject 131-018 Searching for the American Dream (*p.5*). Students of American studies are in an excellent position to explore a variety of career pathways that will draw on the analytical and research knowledge gained in American studies. Students interested in expanding their interests and knowledge in this area are provided with an articulated structure of higher degree options at Melbourne.

American studies focuses on the historical and contemporary frameworks within which American politics, society and culture has developed. American studies subjects are offered by the departments of history, English, art history, cinema studies, political science and the Australian Centre.

## Prerequisites

The American studies program commences in second year. The general prerequisite for entry is the completion of 50 points of first year from any area of study within the Faculty of Arts.

Please note that you should choose your first-year subjects carefully to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the areas of study that offer the subjects within the program.

## Requirements for a major

A major in American studies usually consists of nine 12.5 point subjects, totalling 112.5 points. It comprises:

- two first-year subjects in any area of study (25 points); and
- a minimum of five second/third-year subjects (62.5 points) from the list of core subjects; and
- the remainder from the list of optional subjects.

The first-year 131-145 USA Today: Society, Culture, Identity (*p.3*) is recommended for students intending to take American studies at second and third year.

## American studies subjects

The following subjects are part of the American studies program. Students must consult the relevant area of study entries in this Handbook to make sure that they meet the prerequisites, if any, for these subjects.

	Sem.
<b>First year</b>	
<b>Recommended subject</b>	
131-145 USA Today: Society, Culture, Identity ( <i>p.3</i> )	2
<b>Second/third year</b>	
<b>Core subjects</b>	
106-022 City Cultures: Urban Stories ( <i>p.4</i> )	1
106-049 American Liberals and Moderns ( <i>p.7</i> )	2
106-061 American Voices ( <i>p.9</i> )	1
106-068 Imagining Hollywood ( <i>p.9</i> )	N/A
131-079 Slavery & Freedom in the USA: 1790-1900 ( <i>p.11</i> )	1
131-018 Searching for the American Dream ( <i>p.5</i> )	2
131-080 American Modern: USA 1890-1990 ( <i>p.11</i> )	2
131-220 Rebels and Revolution in Latin America ( <i>p.13</i> )	2
166-016 American Politics and Society ( <i>p.3</i> )	1
166-023 Issues in American Foreign Policy ( <i>p.4</i> )	2
<b>Optional subjects</b>	
100-003 Australia and America ( <i>p.2</i> )	1 rep 2
106-031 Modernist Fiction ( <i>p.5</i> )	N/A
106-033 Writing After Empire ( <i>p.5</i> )	2
107-076 Contemporary Hollywood Cinema ( <i>p.2</i> )	N/A
131-053 The Irish Abroad: Australia, UK & USA ( <i>p.9</i> )	2
166-040 Constitutional Design and Change ( <i>p.6</i> )	N/A

Other subjects with significant American content taught within the Faculty of Arts may be taken with prior approval of the course coordinator and the Associate Dean (Academic Programs).

The following subjects can be taken at fourth year as part of combined honours in American studies.

Third/fourth year and fourth year		Sem.
<b>Art history</b>		
107-420 Art and Mass Culture in the 1960s ( <i>p.6</i> )		N/A
107-466 Postmodern Culture: Art in New York ( <i>p.6</i> )		N/A
<b>History</b>		
131-416 Current Themes in American History ( <i>p.17</i> )		2
131-458 American Nation ( <i>p.19</i> )		N/A
131-462 Reading African-American History ( <i>p.19</i> )		1
<b>English</b>		
106-426 Post-War American Fiction ( <i>p.13</i> )		2
The following subjects contain significant American content. They may be taken as part of the combined honours program in American studies on the condition that;		
<b>a)</b> students identify themselves to the coordinator of the unit as American studies honours students		
<b>b)</b> students undertake to write their major piece of assessment for the subject on American topics.		
<b>Art history</b>		
107-425 Sound and Vision: Art & Popular Music ( <i>p.8</i> )		N/A
<b>Cinema studies</b>		
107-427 Film Criticism and the Canon ( <i>p.4</i> )		N/A
107-431 Postmodernism and the Cinema ( <i>p.5</i> )		N/A
<b>Political science</b>		
166-444 The Emerging World (Dis)Order ( <i>p.11</i> )		1

## Combined honours entry

Currently, there is no pure honours program in American studies. This means that students must combine fourth-year honours in American studies with another area of study.

The prerequisites for entry to combined honours in American studies are:

- completion of all the requirements for the BA;
- completion of a major in American studies;
- an average grade of H2B or higher over the second/third-year subjects within the major; and
- admission to honours in another area of study within the Faculty of Arts.

Entry to fourth-year honours must be approved by the convener of American studies and the Faculty of Arts honours course adviser.

## Combined honours requirements

Students undertaking combined honours in American studies and another area of study must complete:

- 131-538 American Studies Thesis (*p.1*) or 131-537 American Studies Thesis (MYE) (*p.2*) for students commencing in Semester 2; and
  - two honours subject in American studies from the list above (25 points); and
  - three honours subjects in the combined area of study (37.5 points).
- or
- an honours thesis in the combined area of study (37.5 points); and
  - two honours subjects in the combined area of study (25 points); and
  - three honours subjects from the list above (37.5 points).

## For more information

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## Fourth-year subjects

### 131-538 American Studies Thesis

**Availability:** 4th year

**Credit points:** 37.5

**HECS-band:** 1

**Coordinator:** David Goodman

**Prerequisites:** Admission to fourth-year combined honours in American studies.

**Contact:** Regular meetings with the supervisor (*Year long*).

**Description:** An approved thesis topic will be selected in consultation with the convener of American studies.

**Assessment:** A thesis of 12 000 words.

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**131-537 American Studies Thesis (MYE)**

**Availability:** 4th year

**Credit points:** 37.5

**HECS-band:** 1

**Coordinator:** David Goodman

**Prerequisites:** Mid-year admission to fourth-year combined honours in American studies.

**Contact:** Regular meetings with the supervisor (*Semester 1, repeat 2*).

**Description:** An approved thesis topic will be selected in consultation with the convenor of American studies.

**Assessment:** A thesis of 12 000 words.

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**131-458 American Nation**

See full subject details on page 19.