



AMERICAN STUDIES

AMERICANSTUDIES.RICHMOND.EDU

What is American Studies?

American Studies is an interdisciplinary program in which students study American culture, society, identity, and politics by combining coursework in a wide variety of disciplines into a single major.

Richmond's approach to American studies emphasizes the "local" and the "global." In the program's Richmond Seminars, students investigate the American experience through community studies and community-based learning. In Tocqueville Seminars, students place the study of the United States in comparative and international perspective.

A core group of American Studies faculty, who serve as faculty advisors to majors, specialize in American history, politics, literature, media, religion, theater, urban studies, Native American studies, African-American studies, and Latino studies.

The Major

The American Studies major emphasizes student initiative and encourages students to craft a distinctive program of study that meets the intellectual interests of each student. The major consists of nine courses, including a topical survey open primarily to first-year students and sophomores, and a junior/senior seminar that joins theory and practice in a capstone project. Students must also complete at least one Richmond Seminar and one Tocqueville Seminar. Majors work closely with program faculty to determine a specialized course of study for the remaining five electives, two of which must be taken at the 300 level or higher.

The Learning Experience

American studies offers its students an exciting combination of small classes and hands-on learning, both inside and outside the classroom. All courses are taught as discussion seminars by core faculty in the program. In addition to honing their speaking, writing, and research skills, students in American studies learn how to analyze complex ideas, tackle problems with no clear answers, and engage with the world through a variety of platforms.

American Studies majors work closely with both faculty and fellow students in the creation of museum exhibitions, documentary films, digital archives, theater productions, and online journals. In American studies, the city of Richmond, the nation, and the world all serve as laboratories of investigation and learning. Our students develop projects at the local level and also travel as classes to field sites from New Orleans to New York, from London to San Juan. The discipline of American studies increasingly emphasizes explorations of U.S. culture and society in relation to international politics, the global economy, and population migrations. For this reason, American Studies majors are also encouraged to study abroad.

Graduates

American Studies majors pursue diverse career paths including education, law, journalism, government, public policy, communications, finance, and entrepreneurial ventures. Our graduates include the executive director of a major social service organization, an attorney for the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, the president of an investment company, and an editor of The Wall Street Journal.

Faculty

Bertram D. Ashe

Professor of English
Ph.D., College of William and Mary
Areas of specialty: American literature and African-American literature

Edward L. Ayers

Tucker-Boatwright Professor of Humanities
President Emeritus
Ph.D., Yale University
Areas of specialty: southern history, American Civil War, digital humanities

Laura Browder

Tyler and Alice Haynes Professor of American Studies
Ph.D., Brandeis University
Areas of specialty: American literature, cultural history

Alicia Díaz

Associate Professor of Dance
M.A., New York University; M.F.A., The George Washington University
Areas of specialty: contemporary dance, improvisation, and choreography; choreographic work speaks to issues of memory and identity, migration, colonialism, and the legacy of slavery

Margaret Dorsey

Associate Professor of Anthropology
Ph.D., Indiana University
Areas of specialty: border security, Mexican American folklore, border studies

Patricia Herrera

Associate Professor of Theatre
Ph.D., Graduate Center, City University of New York
Areas of specialty: theatre as social change; 20th and 21st century American theatre and performance; Latina/o cultural productions; solo performance; documentary theatre; gender and performance; and hip hop performances

Amy Howard

Assistant Vice President, Community Initiatives and the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement
Ph.D., College of William and Mary
Areas of specialty: U.S. urban history, U.S. social history, documentary studies

Joanna Love

Associate Professor of Music
Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles
Areas of specialty: American and popular music in multimedia, music in U.S. national brand and political advertising

Nicole Maurantonio

Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Communication Studies
Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania
Areas of specialty: public memory, U.S. media history, race and representation, qualitative research methods

Mariela Méndez

Associate Professor of Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Studies and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Ph.D., University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Areas of specialty: Latin American studies,
transnational feminisms, queer theory, and
feminist new materialisms

Robert Nelson

Director, Digital Scholarship Lab
Ph.D., College of William & Mary
Area of specialty: 19th-century United
States, digital humanities

Nicole Sackley

Associate Professor of History and
American Studies
Ph.D., Princeton University
Areas of specialty: U.S. cultural and
intellectual history, United States and
the World

Samantha Seeley

Associate Professor of History
Ph.D., New York University
Areas of specialty: race and slavery in the
early American republic

Monika Siebert

Associate Professor of English
Ph.D., Harvard University
Areas of specialty: Contemporary
American literature, American Indian
literature and film, Asian American
literature

Lauren Tilton

Program Coordinator
Associate Professor of Digital Humanities
Ph.D., Yale University
Areas of specialty: computational/digital,
humanities, visual culture, community
media, politics of representation

Douglas Winiarski

Professor of Religion
Ph.D., Indiana University
Areas of specialty: Religion in early
America, popular religion, Native
American religions

Eric S. Yellin

Associate Professor of History and
American Studies
Ph.D., Princeton University
Area of specialty: Modern United States,
African-American history



OFFICE OF ADMISSION

(804) 289-8640

richmond.edu

Dr. Lauren Tilton, Program Coordinator

(804) 484-1471 • lltilton@richmond.edu

americanstudies.richmond.edu