

# AMERICAN STUDIES

## College of Letters & Science

Julie Sze, Ph.D., Chair of the Department; term ends June 30, 2023

## Department Office

1200 Hart Hall; 530-752-6429; American Studies (<http://ams.ucdavis.edu/>); Faculty (<http://ams.ucdavis.edu/faculty/>)

## The Department

The Department of American Studies approaches the “American” in our field’s name as an important and complicated idea that comes with a range of feelings (from joy to fear to pride to sadness). American Studies explores the cultures of the United States, as well as their transnational exchanges and impact. In American Studies classes, students let their curiosities guide them through the process of analyzing pieces of American culture, including food, nature, childhood, and more, through the lenses of race, class, gender, and disability. American Studies is a place for students who want to know why things are the way they are and how they could be.

American Studies takes an interdisciplinary approach, answering research questions with tools from history, sociology, anthropology, literary criticism, media studies, and science and technology studies. American Studies majors are good critical thinkers, develop excellent writing and communication skills, and most importantly, “learn how to learn”—that is, they learn to figure out what intellectual tools and specialized knowledge they will need to perform a task or solve a problem.

- American Studies, Bachelor of Arts (<https://catalog.ucdavis.edu/departments-programs-degrees/american-studies/american-studies-ab/>)
- American Studies, Minor (<https://catalog.ucdavis.edu/departments-programs-degrees/american-studies/american-studies-minor/>)

## American Studies (AMS)

### AMS 001C – American Lives Through Autobiography (4 units)

*Course Description:* American culture as understood through the individual life stories told by Americans, with attention to the roles of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation in the individual’s life course.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### AMS 001E – Nature & Culture in America (4 units)

*Course Description:* Uses and abuses of nature in America; patterns of inhabitation, exploitation, appreciation, and neglect; attention to California; emphasis on metaphor as a key to understanding ourselves and the natural world; attention to models of healing: stewardship, ecology, the “rights” movement.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### AMS 004 – Freshman Seminar (2 units)

*Course Description:* Investigation of a special topic in American Studies through shared readings, discussions, written assignments, and special activities (such as fieldwork, site visits). Emphasis on student participation in learning.

*Prerequisite(s):* Open only to students who have completed fewer than 40 quarter units.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 2 hour(s).

*Enrollment Restriction(s):* Limited to 25 students.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### AMS 005 – Technology in American Lives (4 units)

*Course Description:* Technology as both a material cultural force and a symbol in American culture; the lives of engineers at work and play; images of the engineer and technology in popular culture; social political and ethical issues raised by technology.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 2 hour(s), Discussion 2 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); Writing Experience (WE).

### AMS 010 – Introduction to American Studies (4 units)

*Course Description:* Ideals, conflicts, and realities defining American Cultures through study of popular music, advertising, and other media. Themes include Imagining America, Citizenship and Belonging, and Cultural/Spatial Practices.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### AMS 012 – U.S. Disability Culture & Medicine (4 units)

*Course Description:* Disability as a form of social exclusion; disability as social and cultural identity; intersections of disability with race, gender, class, and sexuality; popular culture, art, television, film, and literature by disabled people; critiques of medicine by people with disabilities; health disparities; ways to make medicine more inclusive.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

**AMS 021 – Objects & Everyday Life (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Material culture (objects and artifacts ranging from everyday objects like toys and furnishings to buildings and constructed landscapes) as evidence for understanding the everyday (vernacular) lives (gender, social class, ethnicity, region, age, and other factors); collecting and displaying material.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s), Term Paper.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

**AMS 025 – United States as a Business Culture (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Business as a cultural system and its relation to religion, politics, arts, science, technology, and material culture; business themes of success, creativity, invention, and competition in American autobiographies, fiction, advice literature, film, and television; cultures of the workplace; multinational business.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

**AMS 030 – Images of America & Americans in Popular Culture (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Investigation of verbal and visual discourses about American identity in various popular culture products, including film, television, radio, music, fiction, art, advertising, and commercial experiences; discourses about the United States in the popular culture of other societies.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

**AMS 055 – Food in American Culture (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Relationship between food and culture; relationship between food and the social order; influences on eating habits and the tensions between them including identity, convenience, and responsibility; multiple disciplines and genres.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Cross Listing:* FST 055.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

**AMS 059 – Music & American Culture (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Examination of music and American culture. Studies will explore music in its cultural contexts, which may include examinations of recording and broadcasting, of race, class, and gender, the role of technology, and relationships between musical production, consumption and listening.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

**AMS 095 – Careers & Identity in American Culture (2 units)**

*Course Description:* Defining one's identity through the career. Life course, preparation, and choices. Personality and career. Ethics. Gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class in the workplace. Transnational workplace. Conflicts between the career and other social roles.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 1 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

**AMS 098 – Directed Group Study (1-5 units)**

*Course Description:* Directed group study.

*Prerequisite(s):* Consent of instructor.

*Learning Activities:* Variable.

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.

**AMS 099 – Individual Study for Undergraduates (1-5 units)**

*Course Description:* Individual study for undergraduates.

*Learning Activities:* Variable.

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.

**AMS 100 – Methods in American Studies (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Design and implementation of interdisciplinary research, analysis and writing for American Studies and other cultural studies fields. Library and Internet research skills, project/problem definition, methods for study of texts, individuals, communities. Hand-on, skill-building, focused reading, discussion.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture/Discussion 3 hour(s), Term Paper.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

**AMS 101A – Special Topics: Popular Culture Studies (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Intensive reading, writing, and special projects. Interdisciplinary group study of special topics in American Culture Studies, designed for non-majors as well as majors.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

**AMS 101B – Special Topics: Queer & Trans Studies (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Intensive reading, writing, and special projects in queer and/or transgender studies. Specific topic depends on research interests of the instructor.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH).

**AMS 101C – Special Topics: Material Aspects of American Culture (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Intensive reading, writing, and special projects. Interdisciplinary group study of special topics in American Culture Studies, designed for non-majors as well as majors.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 101E – Special Topics: American Lives Through Autobiography (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Intensive reading, writing, and special projects. Interdisciplinary group study of special topics in American Culture Studies, designed for non-majors as well as majors.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 101F – Special Topics: Interrelationship Between Arts & Ideas (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Intensive reading, writing, and special projects. Interdisciplinary group study of special topics in American Culture Studies, designed for non-majors as well as majors.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 101G – Special Topics: New Directions in American Culture Studies (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Intensive reading, writing, and special projects. Interdisciplinary group study of special topics in American Culture Studies, designed for non-majors as well as majors.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 101H – Special Topics: Problems in Cross-Cultural American Studies (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Intensive reading, writing, and special projects. Interdisciplinary group study of special topics in American Culture Studies, designed for non-majors as well as majors.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 110 – A Decade in American Civilization (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Close examination of a single decade in American civilization; the connections between the history, literature, arts, customs, and ideas of Americans living in the decade. Issues and representations of race, class, gender, age, and sexuality in the decade.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 2 hour(s), Discussion 2 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated when studied decades differ.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 125 – Corporate Cultures (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Exploration of the small group cultures of American corporate workplaces, including the role of environment, stories, jokes, rituals, ceremonies, personal style, and play. The effects of cultural diversity upon corporate cultures, both from within and in contact with foreign corporations.

*Prerequisite(s):* Consent of instructor.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 2 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s), Fieldwork 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 130 – American Popular Culture (4 units)**

*Course Description:* American popular expression and experience as a cultural system, and the relationship between this system and elite and folk cultures. Exploration of theories and methods for discovering and interpreting patterns of meaning in American popular culture.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture/Discussion 3 hour(s), Fieldwork 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 139 – Feminist Cultural Studies (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Histories, theories, and practices of feminist traditions within cultural studies.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture/Discussion 4 hour(s).

*Cross Listing:* GSW 139.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 150 – Interdisciplinary Approaches to Environmental Justice/Injustice (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Environmental justice through interdisciplinary lenses. Frameworks that analyze environmental issues through the lens of social justice and human inequality, specifically categories of race, class, gender, nature and nation. Particular focus on California and the Central Valley.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Term Paper.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 151 – American Landscapes & Places (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Comparative study of several American cultural populations inhabiting a region, including their relationship to a shared biological, physical, and social environment, their intercultural relations, and their relationships to the dominant American popular and elite culture and folk traditions.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 2 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s), Fieldwork 3 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 152 – The Lives of Children in America (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Experience of childhood and adolescence in American culture, as understood through historical, literary, artistic, and social scientific approaches.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 2 hour(s), Discussion 2 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 153 – The Individual & Community in America (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Interdisciplinary examination of past and present tensions between the individual and the community in American experience, as those tensions are expressed in such cultural systems as folklore, public ritual, popular entertainment, literature, fine arts, architecture, and social thought.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 2 hour(s), Discussion 2 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 154 – The Lives of Men in America (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Interdisciplinary examination of the lives of boys and men in America, toward understanding cultural definitions of masculinity, the ways individuals have accepted or resisted these definitions, and the broader consequences of the struggle over the social construction of gender.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 2 hour(s), Discussion 2 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 155 – Eating in America (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Interdisciplinary examination of the culture of food in America. Exploration of eating as a richly symbolic event integral to how Americans express and negotiate values, politics and identity.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Fieldwork.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 156 – Race, Culture & Society in the United States (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Interdisciplinary examination of the significance of race in the making of America; how race shapes culture, identities and social processes in the United States; the interweaving of race with gender, class and nationhood in self and community.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 2 hour(s), Discussion 2 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 157 – Animals in American Culture (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Animals as symbols in American thought, as found in folklore, popular culture, literature, and art; customs and stories around human-animal interactions, including hunting, religion, foodways, pets, zoos, circuses, rodeos, theme parks, and scientific research on animals.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture 3 hour(s), Discussion 1 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH) or Social Sciences (SS); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Domestic Diversity (DD); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 158 – Technology & the Modern American Body (4 units)**

*Course Description:* History and analysis of relationships between human bodies and technologies in modern society. Dominant and eccentric examples of how human bodies and technologies influence one another and reveal underlying cultural assumptions.

*Learning Activities:* Lecture/Discussion 3 hour(s), Term Paper.

*Credit Limitation(s):* Not open for credit to students who have taken TCS 158.

*Cross Listing:* CDM 158.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

*General Education:* Arts & Humanities (AH); American Cultures, Governance, & History (ACGH); Writing Experience (WE).

### **AMS 160 – Undergraduate Seminar in American Studies (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Intensive reading, discussion, research, and writing by small groups in selected topics of American Studies scholarship; emphasis on theory and its application to American material.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s), Term Paper.

*Enrollment Restriction(s):* Pass One restricted to American Studies majors; limited enrollment.

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated 1 time(s) when content differs.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 190A – Senior Thesis Research Seminar (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Research and prospectus writing for senior thesis.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 2 hour(s), Extensive Writing.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 190B – Senior Thesis (4 units)**

*Course Description:* In consultation with advisor, student writes an extended research paper on a topic proposed in AMS 190A.

*Prerequisite(s):* AMS 190A; consent of instructor.

*Learning Activities:* Independent Study 12 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

### **AMS 192 – Internship in American Studies (1-12 units)**

*Course Description:* Supervised internship and study in social & community organizations, schools, cultural institutions (e.g., libraries, museums, and archives), or other work sites. Final written report and other assignments as per contract with supervisor.

*Prerequisite(s):* Consent of instructor; enrollment dependent on availability of intern positions, with priority to American Studies majors.

*Learning Activities:* Internship.

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated 12 unit(s).

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.

### **AMS 197T – Tutoring in American Studies (1-5 units)**

*Course Description:* Tutoring in lower division American Studies courses, usually in small discussion groups. Periodic meetings with the instructor in charge; reports and readings.

*Prerequisite(s):* Consent of Chairperson of American Studies Program.

*Learning Activities:* Tutorial 1-5 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated when the tutoring is for a different course.

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.



**AMS 198 – Directed Group Study (1-5 units)**

*Course Description:* Directed group study.

*Prerequisite(s):* Consent of instructor.

*Learning Activities:* Variable.

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.

**AMS 199 – Special Study for Advanced Undergraduates (1-5 units)**

*Course Description:* Special study for advanced undergraduates.

*Prerequisite(s):* Consent of instructor and chairperson of American Studies Program.

*Learning Activities:* Variable.

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.

**AMS 220 – American Folklore & Folklife (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Theory and methods for the study of the folklore and the folk customary behavior of Americans; contributions of folklore studies to scholarship in humanities and social science disciplines.

*Prerequisite(s):* Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s), Term Paper.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

**AMS 250 – Cultural Study of Masculinities (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the social and cultural construction of masculinities; attention to the effects of biology, gender, race, class, sexual and national identities; criticism of oral, printed, visual, and mass mediated texts, and of social relations and structure.

*Prerequisite(s):* Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s), Term Paper.

*Cross Listing:* WMS 250.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

**AMS 255 – Food in American Culture (4 units)**

*Course Description:* Interdisciplinary theories and methods for the study of food in American culture; food studies in relation to issues of identity (age, gender, ethnicity, religion, region, etc.), social relations, systems of production, and cultures of consumption.

*Prerequisite(s):* Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

*Learning Activities:* Seminar 3 hour(s), Term Paper.

*Enrollment Restriction(s):* Graduate standing or advanced undergraduate with consent of instructor.

*Grade Mode:* Letter.

**AMS 298 – Group Study (1-5 units)**

*Course Description:* Group study.

*Learning Activities:* Variable 1-5 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.

**AMS 299 – Individual Study (1-12 units)**

*Course Description:* Individual study.

*Learning Activities:* Variable 1-12 hour(s).

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.

**AMS 396 – Teaching Assistant Training Practicum (1-4 units)**

*Course Description:* Teaching assistant training practicum.

*Prerequisite(s):* Graduate standing.

*Learning Activities:* Variable 1-4 hour(s).

*Repeat Credit:* May be repeated.

*Grade Mode:* Pass/No Pass only.