# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION

Academic Integrity ........................................................................................................... 3
Research Integrity and Assurance .................................................................................... 3
Graduate Student Responsibilities .................................................................................... 3
Safety, Discrimination, and Harassment ......................................................................... 4

## THE MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) DEGREE PROGRAM

Graduate Degree Program ............................................................................................... 5
Enrollment and Tuition ..................................................................................................... 5
Prerequisites and Transfer Credit .................................................................................... 5
The M.A. Curriculum ......................................................................................................... 6
Core Courses .................................................................................................................. 7
Descriptions for Key Courses ......................................................................................... 7
Self-Selected Electives Courses ....................................................................................... 7
Sample M.A. Schedule .................................................................................................... 7
Thesis Committee Option ............................................................................................... 8
Applied Project Committee Option ............................................................................... 8
Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS) .................................................................................. 8
Continuous Enrollment .................................................................................................. 9
Completing the M.A. degree ......................................................................................... 9
Thesis option ................................................................................................................. 9
Applied Project option ................................................................................................. 10
Graduation ..................................................................................................................... 11

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Academic Standards ....................................................................................................... 11
Graded and Ungraded Graduate Courses ..................................................................... 12
Academic (Grade) Grievance ....................................................................................... 12
Incompletes .................................................................................................................... 12

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

FAFSA .............................................................................................................................. 12
Graders ......................................................................................................................... 12
Research Assistantships ............................................................................................... 12
Professional Travel ......................................................................................................... 12
INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides an overview of the Master of Arts (M.A.) in American Studies. However, it is not an official document or contract of Arizona State University and does not replace the policies and procedures established by the Graduate College. Please consult your faculty advisors, American Studies Chair of the Graduate Committee, Dr. Sujey Vega and Graduate Programs Coordinator, Alainah Montemayor and/or the official Graduate College policies and procedures.

Academic Integrity
The highest standards of academic integrity and compliance with the university’s Student Code of Conduct are expected of all graduate students in academic coursework and research activities. The failure of any graduate student to uphold these standards may result in serious consequences including suspension or expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as specified in the academic integrity policies of individual colleges as well as the university.

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, fabrication of data, tampering, plagiarism, or aiding and/or facilitating such activities. At the graduate level, it is expected that students are familiar with these issues and that each student assumes personal responsibility in their work.

Research Integrity and Assurance
The Office of Research Integrity and Assurance’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversees all research at ASU that involves living human or animal subjects. This includes projects that use questionnaires and/or interviews as part of the data to be included in the research project. Students should plan to contact the IRB in the planning stages of their research to get approval prior to initiating research: More information can be found on their website: Institutional Review Board.

When a thesis document is submitted to Graduate Education for format review the document is also checked by IRB. Failure to follow the procedures set by the IRB may result in the student not being able to present the data collected for the research. The process also requires that the faculty member supervising the research has IRB approval.

Graduate Student Responsibilities
Graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with all university and graduate policies and procedures. Each student should also communicate directly with their academic unit to be clear on its expectations for degree completion. Students should check in with them academic advisor at least once a semester to make sure they are on track for successful completion of their degree.

Information is provided to students via MyASU. Students should frequently check their MyASU account for the most up-to-date information regarding their status, holds, items to attend to and other important information. As most information will be sent to student’s ASU email account, please
ensure that those emails are being received effectively, or that they are being forwarded to an email address that is regularly checked.

The Graduate College Policies and Procedures found here:
https://graduate.asu.edu/policies-procedures

Safety, Discrimination, and Harassment
All ASU students and student organizations are bound by the University’s Code of Conduct, which promotes an educational environment that encourages respect, honesty, safety, and collegiality. The Code of Conduct and directions for filing a report can be found on the Dean of Students webpage. Students are encouraged to report any breach of the Code of Conduct or any concerns about other students or members of the ASU community to the Graduate Coordinator or DGS. Anonymous reports of misconduct may be filed with the Dean of Students using the Campus Community Incident Report form. Additionally, ASU takes sexual violence seriously and aims to prevent sexual violence. More information and directions for handling incidents of sexual violence can be found on the Sexual Violence Prevention website.

Institutions of higher education have a large community of people with a variety of backgrounds and beliefs and a large international presence. Arizona State University welcomes diversity among students, staff, faculty and visitors and has strict policies against discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability and qualified veteran status. Providing a safe environment, free from harassment (sexual, religious, racial, etc.), is a priority concern for ASU and should be reported immediately when it occurs or is witnessed.

There are different types and levels of discrimination and harassment. Students should become aware of them so they are careful not to cause an offense and to recognize when they have become a victim. Descriptions can be found in the Academic Affairs Manual. Students who witness offensive behavior or experience inappropriate and unwelcomed responses should contact the Office of Equity and Inclusion. This is the office that monitors and manages reports of discrimination and harassing behavior: 480-965- 5057. All information is kept confidential and it is the responsibility of everyone to report instances when observed. Retaliation against those who report such behavior is not tolerated and every effort will be made to protect those involved.
THE MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) DEGREE PROGRAM

Graduate Degree Program

The field of American Studies is constituted by a multi- and transdisciplinary inquiry into the communities and cultures, values and ideologies, social formations, institutions, imperialist, transnational and late capitalist formations of the United States. American Studies scholars seek to evaluate the processes and ideas that inform the U.S. and its influences upon other cultures and communities, domestically and abroad. The American Studies MA includes critical explorations of power, empire, settler colonialism, and justice. Given our geographical location in the American Southwest, our program values an exploration of diasporic and transnational influences in U.S. cultures and social/political history.

While the array of disciplines spans the arts, humanities, and social sciences, our faculty at ASU cover a broad range of expertise in the areas of critical ethnic studies, Indigenous studies, gender and sexuality studies, Black studies, immigration studies, justice studies, disability studies, queer studies, Latino studies, transborder studies, Asian Pacific American studies, cultural studies, environmental humanities and sports studies, allowing students to focus their education around these areas.

Students gain expertise from working in a community of scholars dedicated to addressing critical questions of what “America” means and what American studies uncovers. Graduate students are immersed in conversations of how one develops, conducts and engages research on the U.S. in academia and beyond. Additionally, faculty and students include the role of other nations, cultures and communities to critically evaluate the United States in global matters. American studies graduates can bridge a strong theoretical foundation with applied research to better equip them to enter national and international dialogues.

Enrollment and Tuition

Graduate students register through MyASU per their enrollment appointment. Details regarding registration and course drop/add procedures are provided in the Registration and Tuition Payment Guide. https://students.asu.edu/registration-and-tuition-payment-guides

American Studies Faculty the MA Graduate Faculty in American Studies consists of Graduate Faculty from various academic disciplines and is interdisciplinary in nature. The Graduate Faculty have been approved by the American Studies MA Faculty to serve as Supervisory Committee Chairs and/or members. A list of American Studies MA Graduate Faculty and their research areas can be found on the SST website.

Prerequisites and Transfer Credit

Students admitted to the M.A. program must complete their undergraduate degree prior to entering the graduate program.

Transfer credit must follow American Studies program requirements, and be approved by the Graduate College. American Studies graduate committee may approve a maximum of six credit hours of 400-level transfer coursework. Pass/Fail 400 level courses, and any credit hours that were applied toward a previously awarded degree, may not be counted as
transfer credit. Graduate courses taken prior to admission to the M.A. that are used as transfer credit must have been completed within three years of the semester and year of admission to the program.

The M.A. Curriculum

The American Studies MA Program offers a flexible selection of graduate courses in various fields. Students select courses under the advisement of their Advisor. All students will be required to take AMS 502, which will provide them a working understanding of American Studies, and the methods and theories American Studies scholars utilize. Students will also be responsible for completing the culminating project, AMS 599-Thesis or AMS 593-Applied Project. The remainder of the curriculum will reflect its interdisciplinary nature by encouraging students to take classes across the disciplines that are central to American Studies as it has been constituted. No more than six credit hours of 400-level courses can be applied towards the Graduate Plan of Study (iPOS).

The M.A. curriculum includes required core and self-selected elective courses. Core courses help build the theoretical foundations and research toolkit, which enable students to gain expertise in substantive areas of research. Students complete the degree with a culminating experience; either a thesis or an applied project. M.A. students are required to complete a total of 30 credit hours as detailed below. All core courses are offered face-to-face. Students may choose to take electives courses online (iCourses) if available and relevant to their plan of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Courses</th>
<th>Number of Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Core Course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven - Eight Elective Courses</td>
<td>21-24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis (SST 599) OR Applied Project (SST 593) and Additional Elective</td>
<td>3-6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>30-33 hours</td>
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Core Courses
M.A. students are required to complete one core course and culminating experience (research or thesis) courses. Students must earn a grade of B or better in each core course.

Descriptions for Key Courses
AMS 502 American Studies Theory and Methods: This three credit-hour course explores some of the major themes in American Studies scholarship by considering American cultural formation and change over the last two centuries. We will pay special attention to debates, themes, and problems that have shaped the perception of the United States, domestically and abroad. The principal categories of analysis are race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and space. The ultimate goal is the production of a major research paper based on primary sources and grounded in the relevant secondary scholarship.

AMS 599 Thesis, or AMS 593 Applied Project: Six credits of AMS 599 (thesis) are required of students writing a thesis. Students selecting the non-thesis applied project option will take three credits of AMS 593 (applied project) in lieu of AMS 599.

Requests to substitute an alternative course for a required core course are generally not accepted per ASU’s Graduate College policy.

Self-Selected Electives Courses
M.A. students are required to complete eight electives courses (24 credits). Electives courses should be chosen in collaboration with a faculty advisor. A faculty advisor will consult on a student’s electives to ensure they focus on a common theme and ultimately help inform the student’s thesis or applied project.

Students can find a list of approved electives offered for a given semester on the SST website: https://sst.asu.edu/content/american-studies-ma-1#collapse2

To seek approval of an elective not listed, students are required to email a copy of the course syllabus as well as a brief description as to why they want to take the course, to the Graduate Coordinator, who will obtain faculty approval. Students are advised to submit electives approval requests prior to the semester of anticipated course registration.

Sample M.A. Schedule
The M.A. degree is typically completed in two years, or four semesters. All work toward the M.A. must be completed within six consecutive years; the clock begins with the semester and year of admission to the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Studies MA Timeline Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At Start of First Semester</td>
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<td>By End of Second Semester</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
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**Faculty Advisors**
Upon entrance into the program, students are assigned temporary advisors. The temporary advisor provides guidance on course selection and other relevant matters until the student identifies a thesis advisory committee or applied project chair. The thesis or applied project chair oversees and approves the plan of study (POS); guides and monitors academic progress; and directs the thesis/applied project and its oral defense.

**Thesis Committee Option**
The advisory committee consists of a chair and two other faculty members. The chair and at least one other member must be American Studies faculty.

**Applied Project Committee Option**
The advisory committee consists of a chair and one other faculty member, serving as a second reader. The chair must be American Studies faculty.

**Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS)**
The Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS) functions as a contract between the student, the academic unit, and the ASU Graduate College. The iPOS is an electronic record of a student’s completed and anticipated coursework. This online form also officially establishes the thesis or applied project advisory committee. The iPOS is submitted before a student begins their second year of enrollment or before they complete 50% of the minimum required 30 credit hours (i.e. before completing 15 credit hours).

Students should work in consultation with their temporary faculty advisor, thesis or applied project chair, and Graduate Coordinator to determine coursework to include on the iPOS. Use the AMERICAN STUDIES M.A. Plan of Study Check sheet (see appendix) as a guide. A draft of the iPOS is first approved by the student’s thesis or applied project chair. The draft is then reviewed by the Chair of the Graduate Committee and the Graduate Programs Coordinator. Finally, the iPOS is submitted electronically to the Graduate College for approval. The Graduate Coordinator will help ensure proper online entry and submission of the iPOS.

Please note that a student’s thesis or applied project chair may approve a maximum of six credit hours of 400-level coursework to be included on the iPOS. Pass/Fail 400 level courses, and any credit hours that were applied toward a previously awarded degree, may not be
included. Graduate courses taken prior to admission to the M.A. that are included on the iPOS must have been completed within three years of the semester and year of admission to the program.

**Continuous Enrollment**
Once admitted to the master’s program, students must be enrolled continuously, excluding summer sessions, until all requirements have been fulfilled. Students must be registered for a minimum of one graduate credit hour during all phases of their graduate education to maintain continuous enrollment. If a plan of study needs to be interrupted for one semester, the student must submit the Maintain Continuous Enrollment request through The Graduate College. This request must be submitted and approved before the anticipated semester of non-registration. There are appropriate circumstances when students may need to withdraw from the university (i.e. medical withdrawal, compassionate leave). The policies for such withdrawals are the same for both undergraduate and graduate students. Types of withdrawals and procedures can be found at: students.asu.edu/drop-add. More information on CLAS policies and procedures for medical and compassionate withdrawals can be found here: https://clas.asu.edu/resources/medical-withdrawal. Students should reach out to them Graduate Coordinator for guidance on any type of withdrawal.

**Completing the M.A. degree**
The Graduate College requires all work towards a master’s degree be completed within six consecutive years.

The thesis or applied project constitutes the culmination of a student’s degree. It reflects the research area of specialization identified by the student in consultation with the thesis advisory committee or applied project committee. Before any formal work on the thesis or applied project is begun, the advisory committee or applied project committee approves the student’s research prospectus. The prospectus is a statement of the topic area, a brief discussion of its significance, the primary research questions to be addressed, and the research design.

**Thesis option**
The thesis option is recommended for American Studies students who intend to pursue a doctoral program or conduct research in the future. The thesis should address questions inclusive of contemporary topics, themes, and theories engaged in by the field of American Studies. To undertake a thesis, the student must form a thesis committee (a chair and two additional committee members) and present a thesis proposal (research prospectus). It is expected that at least two committee members be affiliated directly with the American Studies program. The thesis committee must approve the thesis proposal before the student proceeds to the next step. The length and specifics of the thesis proposal will be determined by the thesis committee.

Typically, a proposal includes a literature review to display the student’s familiarity with the field of inquiry and gaps in the literature. The length of a master's thesis for this program is typically around 25,000 words. The 25,000-word count does not include endnotes and references.
When the thesis committee is satisfied with the progress of the thesis, the student presents and defends their thesis in an oral examination. The thesis defense must be scheduled according to Graduate College policy, and the student should contact the Graduation section in the Registrar’s office well in advance of the defense. Notice of the student’s defense, with an abstract, must be posted for SST faculty and students no later than one week before the date of the defense. Interested parties may attend the defense. After the thesis defense, the committee members and SST Chair of the Graduate Committee sign the Report for Master’s Thesis Defense. A copy of the defense form and the thesis must be taken to the Graduate College. The chair must also give a copy to the American Studies faculty lead.

Applied Project option

The applied project typically consists of a study (often a Community engaged research) with applied results that can contribute to the topics relevant to the field of American Studies. The applied project could assist the needs of an existing organization, but it could also be a response to solve a problem identified by the student, without necessarily being connected to a specific organization. The applied project should identify the problem to be addressed, and include a brief literature review on the topic, an analysis of the situation, and conclude with recommendations. The output of the applied project could be a report, but it could also be a video, a curriculum proposal, an evaluation, a website, or other formats. For written reports, the estimated length of the applied project is around 7,500-10,000 words.

When the chair is satisfied with the progress of the applied project, the student should contact the Graduation section in the Registrar’s office. This should be done well in advance of the defense. The student will then present and defend the applied project in an oral examination, attended by the chair and committee member(s). The defense is not publicized and The Graduate College does not require format approval nor does the student need to submit any form to the Graduate College. After the defense, the committee members and the AMERICAN STUDIES M.A. Chair of the Graduate Committee will sign the internal form (American Studies Report of Final Master’s Applied Project). The chair will then give the form to the Graduate Director and approve the posting of a letter grade for the applied project. Students must earn a grade of “B” or higher to pass the Applied Project requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Option (30 credit hours required)</th>
<th>AMS 502: American Studies Theory and Methods (3 credits)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electives: 500-level or above* courses in AMS, HST, AFR, ENG, FMS, SST, THE, WST, REL or other disciplines related to primary field (21 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AMS 599 Thesis (6 credits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students may take up to 6 credit hours of 400-level courses related to research with approval from the American Studies graduate committee.
Applied Option
(30 credit hours required)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMS 502</td>
<td>American Studies Theory and Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives:</td>
<td>500-level or above* courses in AMS, HST, AFR, ENG, FMS, SST, THE, WST, REL or other disciplines related to primary field</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMS 593</td>
<td>Applied Project</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students may take up to 6 credit hours of 400-level courses related to research with approval from the DGS.

Graduation
After all coursework has been completed, the requirements for The Graduate College have been met, and the thesis or applied project has been approved, the student is eligible for graduation. It is a student’s responsibility to check The Graduate College’s webpage for information related to deadlines and procedures. The student must be enrolled during the semester or summer session in which the student defends the thesis or applied project.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Academic Standards
The M.A. program in American Studies, and the ASU Graduate College, expects its graduate students to maintain high academic standards. Specifically, graduate students must maintain a minimum 3.00 grade point average (GPA) to maintain satisfactory academic progress and to graduate. The minimum 3.00 GPA must be maintained on all GPA’s (Plan of Study (iPOS) GPA, Overall Graduate GPA and Cumulative GPA)

1. The iPOS GPA is calculated on all courses that appear on the student’s approved iPOS (with the exception of LAW and Transfer credits)
2. Cumulative ASU GPA represents all courses completed at ASU during the graduate career.
3. The Overall Graduate GPA is based on all courses numbered 500 or higher that appear on the transcript after admission to a graduate program or graduate non-degree. This includes shared coursework if in an approved accelerated bachelor’s/master’s program. Courses with grades of “D” (1.00) and “E” (0.00) cannot appear on the iPOS but will be included when calculating the Graduate GPA. Courses with an “I” grade cannot appear on the iPOS. In addition, students must earn a grade of “B” or higher in each of the required core courses, as well as applied project courses. A student who earns a grade below “B” (3.00) in a required core course/applied project course must retake that course and earn a grade of “B” (3.00) or higher.

A student whose GPA falls below 3.00 will be notified in writing that they will be placed on probationary status. While on probationary status, the student must take no fewer than nine credit hours within two consecutive semesters immediately following placement on probationary status. The nine credit hours will be determined after consulting with the Graduate Director and obtaining approval from the student’s faculty chair. If the student does not attain a 3.0 GPA minimum after taking nine credit hours, the student will be notified in writing that the program will recommend their dismissal to the Graduate College.
**Graded and Ungraded Graduate Courses**

Courses which involve classroom instruction may be taken for a letter grade (A, B, C, D, E) or for a grade of “Y” (pass). Courses such as internships, reading and conference hours, and research hours, are generally recorded as a grade of “Y” for “pass.” Theses/Dissertation hours are also recorded as a grade of “Y” for “pass.”

**Academic (Grade) Grievance**

Student grade appeals must be processed in the regular semester immediately following the issuance of the grade in dispute (by commencement for fall or spring), regardless of whether the student is enrolled at the university. Full procedure can be found here: https://clas.asu.edu/resources/academic-grievance

**Incompletes**

Incompletes for courses are discouraged. However, if a student should receive an incomplete, the work for that course must be completed within one calendar year. It is a student’s responsibility to ensure that the grade is updated before that deadline is enforced. Check the Graduate College policies and procedures for additional information.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

**FAFSA**

Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Each student should have a current FAFSA on file in order to meet the eligibility requirements for scholarships, grants, and other funding opportunities.

**Graders**

When funds are available, student worker grader positions are awarded competitively on a semester basis, typically to master’s students. Graders work with assigned SST faculty, including those teaching undergraduate courses in Justice Studies, Gender Studies, African and African American Studies, and Asian and Pacific American Studies.

**Research Assistantships**

Graduate students may be hired as Research Assistants by School of Social Transformation faculty (or faculty across the university) with funds derived from a grant or other sources. External Sources of Financial Assistance. Check with The Graduate College for internal and external fellowships and awards for master’s students to help finance graduate studies.

**Professional Travel**

Students are encouraged to participate in professional academic conferences as a part of them intellectual and academic growth. Based on available funds, and according to guidelines outlined in the application form, American Studies provides limited support for travel. Funds also may be available from the Graduate and Professional Students Association (GPSA), and other internal or external resources. Students must be making satisfactory academic progress in their program of study for their travel funding applications to be considered.