

American studies is a vibrant and growing interdisciplinary field that integrates a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding the full range and diversity of American national experiences. Eschewing traditional disciplinary boundaries or limitations, the American Studies major provides the most encompassing approach to American cultural, intellectual, and popular issues in a global and transnational framework.

THE PROGRAM

This flexible academic program allows students to design an individualized course of study drawing on a wide variety of disciplines, including history, English, political science, criminal justice, art, film, theatre, journalism and literature; sociology, religious studies and others. Virginia Wesleyan's American Studies program also incorporates global approaches to American topics, including borderlands, spatial history, sound studies and transnationalism. Great emphasis is placed upon critical thinking, intellectual inquiry and research.

THE MAJOR

The American Studies major invites students to explore the rich history and culture of the United States and, where possible, the role of the concept of "America" for various and diverse communities within and outside of the United States. Each student designs a course of study in consultation with the American Studies Director.

THE COURSES

The program offers students an important and exciting educational experience both in and out of the classroom. Required courses for the major are Introduction to American Studies, Theories of Mass Communications, Theory and Criticism, Foundation of Sociology, Feminist and Gender Theory, Junior Research Seminar, and American Studies Thesis.

INTERNSHIPS/UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Students are provided with an opportunity to explore in-depth a topic related to American studies. American Studies majors will, in consultation with the program director, be assigned a thesis director who will work with the student to develop a topic, outline a program of research and reading, oversee the development of the agreed-upon topic, and assist in the training in the appropriate scholarly theory/method in the exploration of the topic. American Studies majors may take advantage of the history Department's internship program.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

An interdisciplinary major within the liberal arts, American Studies prepares students for careers in a myriad of fields such as law, entertainment, social service, teaching, journalism, business, library science and the making of public policy, as well as for graduate and professional degrees.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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