American Studies

American Studies at MIT offers students the opportunity to organize subjects from various fields (e.g., history, anthropology, literature, political science, music, art, architecture, and urban planning) into personally constructed interdisciplinary programs as a way of gaining an integrated understanding of American society and culture. Students can focus on any of several areas of interest, such as American literature; folklore and popular culture; black history and culture; women’s studies; American history, politics, or law; the history of science and technology; and American art, architecture, or music. Thus, a program in American Studies is ideal for preparing students for further work not only in the various humanistic fields, but also in law, urban planning, management, architecture, engineering, medicine, teaching, and the media.

The program has three primary objectives:

• To understand the underlying system of beliefs that informs every aspect of American culture—its myths, institutions, politics and literature, its characteristic dreams and rituals.
• To understand the uses and limits of different methods and intellectual disciplines as tools for exploring the complexities of a culture.
• To understand the American present in relation to the American past.

As noted in the degree chart (http://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/humanities-course-21), the program includes a pre-thesis tutorial (21.THT), a thesis (21.THU), and a minimum of nine restricted electives (108 units) selected from at least two of the following three disciplinary areas:

• Area I: Humanities and the Arts
• Area II: Social Sciences; Science, Technology, and Society
• Area III: Historical Studies

Up to six subjects (72 units) may be used for both the major and the GIRs, but the units from those subjects may not count toward the 180 units required beyond the GIRs. No more than one subject that counts toward the distribution component of the HASS Requirement may also be counted toward American Studies requirements. In addition, at least eight of the subjects required for the program cannot count toward any other major or minor.

The list of restrictive electives below is not exhaustive. Additional information can be obtained from the American Studies advisor, Professor Christopher Capozzola (capozzol@mit.edu), E51-284, 617-452-4960, or from the SHASS academic administrator, Andrea Wirth (awirth@mit.edu), 4-240, 617-253-4441.

Restricted Electives

Select 9-12 subjects from at least two of the following areas:

**Area I: Humanities and the Arts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21L.006</td>
<td>American Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21L.011</td>
<td>Introduction to Film Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21L.432</td>
<td>Understanding Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21L.487</td>
<td>Modern Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21L.501</td>
<td>The American Novel</td>
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<tr>
<td>21L.504[J]</td>
<td>Race and Identity in American Literature</td>
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<td>21L.512</td>
<td>American Authors</td>
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<td>21M.215</td>
<td>Music of the Americas</td>
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<tr>
<td>21M.226</td>
<td>Jazz</td>
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<tr>
<td>21M.283</td>
<td>Musicals</td>
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<tr>
<td>21M.284</td>
<td>Film Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>21M.295</td>
<td>American Popular Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>21W.742[J]</td>
<td>Writing about Race</td>
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**Area II: Social Sciences; Science, Technology, and Society**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17.20</td>
<td>Introduction to the American Political Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.251</td>
<td>Congress and the American Political System I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.261</td>
<td>Congress and the American Political System II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.263</td>
<td>Electoral Politics, Public Opinion, and Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.265</td>
<td>Public Opinion and American Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.269</td>
<td>Race, Ethnicity, and American Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.28[J]</td>
<td>The War at Home: American Politics and Society in Wartime 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.317</td>
<td>US Social Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.40</td>
<td>American Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.483</td>
<td>US Military Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21A.120</td>
<td>American Dream: Exploring Class in the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STS.001</td>
<td>Technology in American History</td>
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<tr>
<td>STS.026</td>
<td>History of Manufacturing in America</td>
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<tr>
<td>STS.027[J]</td>
<td>The Civil War and the Emergence of Modern America: 1861-1890 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>STS.048</td>
<td>African Americans in Science, Technology, and Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>STS.049</td>
<td>The Long War Against Cancer</td>
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</table>
### Area III: Historical Studies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>11.013[J]</td>
<td>American Urban History</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.014[J]</td>
<td>History of the Built Environment in the US</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.28[J]</td>
<td>The War at Home: American Politics and Society in Wartime ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21G.043[J]</td>
<td>Introduction to Asian American Studies: Historical and Contemporary Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.101</td>
<td>American History to 1865</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.102</td>
<td>American History since 1865</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.201</td>
<td>The American Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21H.211</td>
<td>The United States in the Nuclear Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21H.214</td>
<td>War and American Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21H.220[J]</td>
<td>Metropolis: A Comparative History of New York City</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.226[J]</td>
<td>Riots, Strikes, and Conspiracies in American History</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.227</td>
<td>History of the US Supreme Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.228</td>
<td>American Classics</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.229</td>
<td>The Black Radical Tradition in America</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.281</td>
<td>MIT and Slavery: Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.282</td>
<td>MIT and Slavery: Publication</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.315</td>
<td>American Consumer Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.319</td>
<td>Race, Crime, and Citizenship in American Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.320[J]</td>
<td>Gender and the Law in US History</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.321[J]</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
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<tr>
<td>21H.322</td>
<td>Christianity in America</td>
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<tr>
<td>STS.027[J]</td>
<td>The Civil War and the Emergence of Modern America: 1861-1890 ²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Counts as Area II or III, but not both.