



American Studies

What does it mean to be American? What are the origins of American ideals, politics, values and culture? How are our lives shaped by race, ethnicity, class and gender? These are some of the questions explored in American Studies, an interdisciplinary program that delves into American culture and history. Students use perspectives from many fields, including history, literature, sociology, psychology, politics, religion, the arts and the sciences to gain an understanding of the American experience and its relation to our complex, interconnected world.

A Distinctive Program

The focus area for the American studies major or minor is a unique feature of the program. Each student creates a concentration area centered on topic that interests him or her -- for example, political conflict in the U.S., gender and popular culture and religion and American activism. The focus area allows students to think creatively about their education and make connections between areas of study.

The program also supports Stetson American Studies International, an exchange program for international students of American studies, and the Student Research in Science and Religion program, which allows students to research topics related to the cultural impact of science and religion. Through American studies, students also pursue experiential learning projects, teaching internships and internships at public history sites.

Academics and Research

The program has a prestigious history, originating with the establishment of the Charles E. Merrill Department of American Studies in 1955, one of the first American studies departments in the country.

Independent research

Students carry out the senior research project required of all arts and sciences majors. Students also do independent research in many upper-division classes, as well as through self-designed independent study courses.

Preparation for graduate study

The American studies program provides excellent preparation for graduate study, as it fosters the key skills of writing, critical thinking and oral communication. Our students have gone on to graduate study in many areas including history, law and English.

Awards and Recognition

Distinguished faculty

Fast Facts

Number of faculty: 2

Can you major in this program? Yes

Can you minor in this program? Yes

Emphasis within the major: Students select an emphasis of their choice.

Program website:

stetson.edu/american-studies

This department provides students with skills that can be applied to many professions including education, communication, entertainment industry, public history, research and social service.

The faculty associated with the program include many across the university. Among our core faculty, Paul Croce has twice received Stetson's HAND award for research. Faculty include:

- [Paul J. Croce](#), Ph.D., Brown University; American politics and culture, political and ideological trends, popular culture, environmental issues, science and religion
- [Emily Mieras](#), Ph.D., College of William and Mary; gender and women's history in the U. S., gender and social reform, popular culture and consumer culture

Grant-funded research

Students have access to the Hague-Critoph fund, a special fund named for the founders and first professors of the program, which funds travel and research. Students can use this fund to conduct archival research, on-site interviews and other primary research opportunities. Students are also encouraged to take part in the SURE program, or Stetson Undergraduate Research Experience. Each year undergraduate scholars are selected in a university-wide competition for grants to work with a faculty mentor on a summer research project.

Undergraduate awards and honors

The department gives the Dian Christensen Award in American Studies for enthusiastic learning and sharing.

Beyond the Classroom

Internships

Our students do internships at local museums and historic sites, among other locations, for course credit or cash payment. These opportunities give students hands-on experience in a specific field that can provide career options in the future. Students have interned at Atlantic Records, Florida Department of Transportation, International American Studies Faculty in Austria, Museum of Arts and Sciences in Daytona Beach, and Nature Conservancy, among others.

After Stetson

Diverse careers

Graduates in American studies gain a wide range of knowledge and skills, including:

- Communication (written and spoken) skills
- A deep grounding in American history and cultural expression
- Critical thinking skills
- Research experience

American studies graduates have gone on to be college professors, university administrators, secondary school teachers, lawyers, journalists and entertainment industry executives. American Studies is also excellent preparation for careers in television production, public history (including museum work), any humanities/social sciences graduate program, research institute work, government careers and social service.

Recent alumni have attended Stetson University College of Law, Stetson's master's program in English, James Madison University, the University of Georgia program in social work, Florida State University Law School, University of Colorado (graduate degree in religious studies), Savannah College of Art and Design (M.F.A. in photography) and University of Florida (graduate degree in women's studies).

More Information



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