AMERICAN STUDIES (AMSD)

AMSD 220 Foundations of American Identities and Cultures (3 credits)
Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100. This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of American Studies. Students will engage with primary and secondary sources of all kinds dealing with history, literature, culture, and other fields. The course highlights primary questions in American Studies, and draws from multiple texts, genres, and themes. It explores the many ways the United States has been historically defined and interpreted, and the ways that various narratives, symbols, and cultural products have contributed to both dominant and dissident understandings. The course will progress through a set of problems or questions about particular historical moments, with the goal of exposing students to intellectual and creative possibilities in the field of American Studies, as well as providing incoming majors with key concepts and analytical tools that can be used in more advanced courses.

AMSD 330 American Identities and Cultures: Theories and Methods (3 credits)
Prerequisite(s): AMSD 220. This course will familiarize students with core theoretical and methodological approaches to American Studies, including case studies of important debates in the field. It will look at the interdisciplinary basis of American Studies and how it engages with other fields. Students will learn different ways of understanding and analyzing culture in many forms including high art, folk and popular culture, subcultures, countercultures, and material culture; they will consider the role of culture in shaping individual, group, regional, and American national identities, with attention to historically powerful categories of such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class and also to transnational contexts. Students will become practitioners by learning how to formulate research questions, identify sources, and select suitable methods of inquiry, including work with archival sources, electronic databases and digitized collections, and published materials.

AMSD 440 Capstone in American Identities and Cultures (3 credits)
Prerequisite(s): AMSD 330. Students will complete an externship at a local site where their knowledge of American identities and cultures will be professionally valuable—for example, a museum, historical site, performing arts group, library, or nonprofit organization among other opportunities. Students will work independently under the supervision of a faculty member.