## American Studies

### What can I do with this major?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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</table>
| **Education** | Universities and colleges  
- Teaching  
- Research  
- Information/Library Science  
- Higher Education Administration and Student Support Services including:  
  - Admissions  
  - Financial Aid  
  - Academic Advising  
  - Development  
  - Alumni Affairs  
  - International Education and Study Abroad  
  - Career Services  
  - Residence Life  
  - Student Activities and Greek Life  
  - Orientation  
  - Leadership  
  - Multicultural Student Programming  
- Support programs, e.g. Educational Advancement Program, Upward Bound  
- Community libraries  
- Nonprofit organizations | Earn a Ph.D. to teach and research at four-year institutions. The interdisciplinary nature of American studies makes it good preparation for advanced education in a variety of fields in the humanities and social sciences.  
Obtain a master’s degree in student affairs or library/information science if interested in those areas.  
Get involved in leadership roles on campus such as peer mentor, resident advisor, or orientation leader.  
Join related professional associations as a student member.  
Volunteer to assist a professor with research or take an independent study class.  
Develop strong communication and public speaking skills. |
| **Museums and Galleries** | Museums: University, public, private  
- Administration  
- Curatorial  
- Preservation and Conservation  
- Restoration  
- Registrarial  
- Collections Management  
- Exhibit Design/Preparation  
- Archive Management  
- Art Authentication  
- Education  
- Publications  
- Development  
- Docent Coordination  
- Public Relations  
- Reproductions and Retailing  
- Archives  
- Historical homes  
- Special collections  
- Historical societies  
- Natural history museums  
- Living history museums  
- Art galleries  
- State and local government  
- Federal government, particularly the National Archives and Records Administration  
- Non-profit organizations  
- Research institutions  
- Corporations | Gain relevant experience through internships or volunteer positions in museums or galleries.  
Earn a graduate degree in museum studies, conservation, information science, or related area. Research prerequisites and take the necessary courses. The most competitive candidates may have more than one graduate degree.  
Acquire strong experience with computers, databases, and software.  
Get involved with relevant student organizations  
Develop excellent written and oral communication skills, organizational skills, and an attention to detail.  
Learn about grant writing, budgeting, and legal issues surrounding historical artifacts. |
### Areas

#### Museums and Galleries Continued

- **EMPLOYERS**
  - Museums and historical sites
  - Historical associations and societies
  - Cultural heritage organizations
  - Historical projects
  - Research and service institutions
  - Libraries
  - Educational institutions
  - Local and national nonprofit agencies
  - Trade or professional associations
  - Special interest groups
  - Foundations

- **NONPROFIT**
  - Administration
  - Management
  - Public Relations
  - Program Coordination
  - Fund Raising/Development
  - Policy Analysis
  - Grant Writing
  - Research
  - Volunteer Coordination
  - Community Education
  - Direct Service

- **STRATEGIES**
  - Attend professional conferences, seminars, and trainings.
  - Earn the “Certified Archivist” designation.
  - Most curators specialize in a material or objects.

- **Gain experience through volunteering or completing an internship.**
- **Obtain leadership roles in relevant campus and community organizations.**
- **Develop strong communication and research skills.**
- **Supplement curriculum with courses in business, psychology, sociology, or social work depending upon interest.**
- **Learn how to write grants.**
- **Develop an understanding of budgeting and fiscal management.**
- **Research organizations’ values to find a good fit with yours. It is critical that you are knowledgeable about and committed to the work you’re going to do.**
- **Investigate term of service or service corps positions as a way to gain entry into the field.**
- **Consider earning a graduate degree for more job opportunities and advancement.**

#### Business

- **EMPLOYERS**
  - Product and service organizations
  - Retail stores
  - Hotels
  - Restaurants
  - Manufacturers
  - Banks and financial institutions
  - Insurance companies
  - Hospitals and other healthcare organizations
  - Print and electronic media
  - Real estate agencies
  - Consulting firms

- **STRATEGIES**
  - Earn a minor in business or take business classes.
  - Develop strong verbal and written communication, interpersonal, and analytical skills.
  - Learn to work well on a team.
  - Seek leadership roles in campus organizations.
  - Join related professional associations.
  - Gain experience through internships, part-time, or summer jobs.
  - Develop computer skills in areas such as spreadsheets, databases, and presentation software.
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<td><strong>BUSINESS CONTINUED</strong></td>
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<td>Conduct informational interviews to learn about jobs of interest and to build a network of contacts. Be prepared to start in entry-level positions such as management trainee programs. Look for companies that have an interest in hiring “any major.”</td>
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<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>Training and Development</td>
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<td>Labor Relations</td>
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<td>Writing/Editing</td>
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<td>Corporate Communication</td>
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<td>Office Management</td>
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<td><strong>GOVERNMENT</strong></td>
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<td>City or Town Management</td>
<td>Major in an applicable interest area such as business, political science, or public administration. Take courses in conflict management and develop negotiation skills. Volunteer to work on a local or national political campaigns. Join related student organizations and earn leadership roles. Get involved with student government and campus campaigns. Complete an internship with a government agency to get a foot in the door. Research government internship programs. Maintain a strong grade point average as many government programs are very competitive. Learn local, state, and federal government job application procedures. Visit the campus career center for assistance. Develop a network of contacts through informational interviews and referrals. Consider earning a graduate degree to qualify for more opportunities.</td>
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<td>Translation/Interpretation</td>
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<td>Regional Planning</td>
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<td>Public Policy</td>
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<td>Intelligence</td>
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<td>Community Affairs</td>
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<td>Campaigning</td>
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<td>Legislative Assistance</td>
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<td>Program Administration</td>
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<td>Foreign Service</td>
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<td>Legislative, Executive, or Judicial Services</td>
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<td>There are over 170 departments and agencies in the federal government. Conduct research to determine which are a good fit for you. Local and state government</td>
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<td>Legislatures and other elected public officials</td>
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<td>School districts</td>
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<td>Court systems</td>
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### Communication

**Areas:**
- Journalism
- Creative Writing
- Freelance Writing
- Copy Writing
- Editing
- Research and Analysis
- Advertising

**Employers:**
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Broadcast media companies including television and movie industry
- Trade, professional, or consumer publications
- Internet sites
- Advertising agencies
- Publishing houses
- Large corporations
- Self-employment/freelance

**Strategies:**
- Obtain a minor in English or journalism or take other writing-focused classes.
- Write for campus publications such as college newspapers, magazines, or department/program newsletters.
- Volunteer to assist or tutor students in a writing center.
- Intern with a publishing house, magazine, or other relevant organizations.
- Create a portfolio of writing samples, especially those that have been published.
- Seek opportunities for recognition and networking through writing contests and freelance writing submissions.
- Become familiar with the proposal and submission process involved in freelance writing.

### Law

**See also What Can I Do With This Major in Law?**

**Prosecution**

**Contractual**

**Corporate**

**Nonprofit or Public Interest**

**Government**

**Mediation**

**Other Specialties**

**Law Assistance**

**Employers:**
- Law firms
- Federal, state, and local government
- Private practice
- Corporations
- Special interest groups
- Universities and colleges
- Legal aid societies
- Nonprofit and public interest organizations
- Corporation
- Legal clinics
- Other private legal services

**Strategies:**
- Develop strong research skills and attention to detail.
- Participate in debate or forensic team to hone communication skills.
- Choose courses or a minor to specialize in a particular area of law, e.g. a minor in business for a career in corporate law.
- Find part-time or summer work in a law firm.
- Shadow an attorney to learn more about the field and various specialties.
- Get involved in pre-law organizations.
- Plan to attend law school and earn a law degree.
  - Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong faculty recommendations. Prepare for the LSAT (Law School Admission Test).
- Obtain specialized certification for paralegal positions.
GENERAL INFORMATION

• American Studies majors are excellent candidates for a number of graduate school and professional school options because of their broad liberal arts background, as well as, specific interests that may set them apart from other students. For those wishing to pursue graduate education, maintain a high GPA, establish relationships with faculty to secure strong recommendations, and gain experience through volunteer, work, or research opportunities. Carefully research programs in order to choose specializations and find the best fit for you.

• American Studies provides an interdisciplinary background that helps students develop analytical, critical thinking, and writing skills while gaining knowledge about American culture and society. The curriculum will expose students to many areas including history, literature, religion, music, art, folklore, and material culture.

• It is beneficial to pursue specialized or technical skill areas to make your experience more specific. Take courses in marketing, finance, statistics, journalism, or communications depending on your interests. Considering adding a second major or a minor.

• Some students may choose to study American Studies because they enjoy the subject but wish to pursue careers requiring “any major.” In this scenario, it is critical to develop skills relevant to targeted field through internships, part-time or summer jobs, or volunteer experiences.

• Develop strong leadership skills; run for office in school or community organizations. Volunteer to organize or lead an event or project.

• Conduct informational interviews to learn about careers of interest and develop a network contacts.

• Gain experience in fund raising and grant writing techniques. Nonprofit and educational organizations are often funded in this manner.