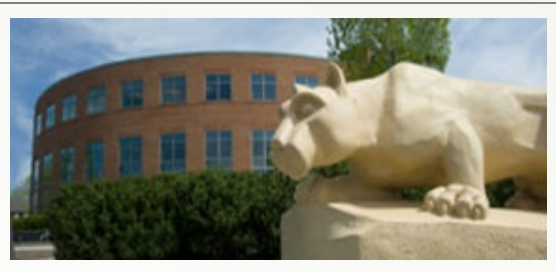


## Master of Arts in American Studies

Emphasizing the interdisciplinary study of American society and culture, coursework and hands-on experiences provide students with the knowledge and analytical skills to thrive in educational institutions, governmental and public policy agencies, museums, cultural organizations, archives, communications venues and doctoral programs. Many students have enhanced their careers in secondary education or museums by obtaining a master's degree at Penn State Harrisburg.



### Contact

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Program Website: <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/am-studies>



**PennState**  
Harrisburg

School of Humanities



**Master of Arts in American  
Studies**

## Curriculum

### Degree Requirements

The student is required to take a minimum of 30 credits in American Studies, including at least 18 credits in the 500 series; AM ST 500, 591, and AM ST 580 or 600 are required. AM ST 500 should be taken within the first two semesters of study; AM ST 591 should be taken in the last two semesters of study. Usually in the last semester, students are required to complete their program with a major paper by taking AM ST 580 or thesis in which case AM ST 600 is taken. The choice of AM ST 580 to fulfill graduation requirements is for an original scholarly master's paper or project. One to 6 credits in AM ST 580 can be earned; the typical number of credits for the culminating project is three. The choice of AM ST 600 is for a thesis and is taken for 6 credits. The thesis must follow the guidelines established by the Graduate School Thesis Office.

(See <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/thesis.html>)

Visit for complete details.

## Testimonials

Since 2007, I have worked as an independent folklorist. My contract fieldwork in Texas and beyond is broad based: oral histories, documentary photography, publications, exhibits, community programs. Following graduate school with coursework in folklore, material culture, and public heritage, I served in supervisory positions as a public sector folklorist working with traditional artists coast to coast. Besides being involved in exhibition and festival work, I was the author of several publications growing out of field surveys, such as *From Heart to Hand: Folk & Traditional Arts of Pennsylvania's Northern Tier*; *Mid Atlantic Folk Arts Outreach Project*; and *From Bridge to Boardwalk: An Audio Journey Across Maryland's Eastern Shore*.



**Douglas Manger**  
Independent Folklorist

## Courses Overview

The American studies master's program prepares students to thrive in diverse settings—museums and archives, educational institutions; governmental and public policy agencies; and Ph.D. programs in myriad fields related to American studies. Experiential learning is embedded in courses such as Museum Studies (AMST 480), Public Heritage Practices (AMST 482), and Public Heritage (AMST 550). Students frequently undertake internships at museums, archives, and governmental organizations to expand their experiences and hone career choices. Many M.A. students elect to complete the Graduate Certificate in Public Heritage and Museum Practice or the Graduate Certificate in Folklore and Ethnography .

American studies graduate courses allow students to focus on a broad range of interests and specialties. All students take AMST 500, which offers advanced preparation in American studies theories and methods, and AMST 591, which prepares students to devise, research, and write their final project or thesis. Wide-ranging courses include American Civilization in the Twentieth Century (AMST 535) and Material Culture and Folklife (AMST 531). Students may take up to 12 credits of 400-level courses, providing further focus and breadth to their studies. Throughout their time at Penn State Harrisburg, students work closely with faculty members to identify, research, and complete their culminating work, a master's project or thesis (AMST 580).

For course descriptions and requirements, see the [University Bulletin](#).

## Program Requirements for Admission

Requirements	More Information
GPA	Minimum of 2.75 junior/senior grade-point average on a 4.00 scale
Education	The graduate program in American Studies accepts students from a wide array of disciplines — art, history, English, sociology, and anthropology — but recommends educational preparation related to the interdisciplinary study of American culture.
Supporting Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <a href="#">Two letters of recommendation</a> from individuals who can attest to the student's ability to handle graduate study</li><li>✓ A statement of intent (approx. 1,000 words outlining their preparation for study, proposed fields of study, and career goals) and</li><li>✓ A sample of written work (seminar paper or equivalent research paper) as evidence of their American research and writing skills.</li><li>✓ Students applying for scholarships and assistantships are requested to submit general examination scores of the <a href="#">Graduate Record Examination (GRE)</a> taken within five years previous to the date of application. The GRE is recommended, but not required, for admission.</li></ul>

### Application Deadline

Semester	Deadline
Fall	February 15
Spring	October 15