

American studies

Essentials

Taught programme

MA degree

American Literature: Critical Reading

Research programmes

MPhil, PhD American History or Literature

Admissions requirements

For information on overseas qualifications that meet the admissions requirements, refer to pages 156-157

MA

A literature-based first- or upper second-class undergraduate honours degree

MPhil

A first- or upper second-class undergraduate honours degree in history, literature or American studies

PhD

A Masters degree in a subject relevant to your chosen area of research. For advice on research supervision, prospective PhD applicants are encouraged to look at the research areas and faculty interests listed on page 39, and to contact the School at the address listed below

English language requirements

IELTS 6.5, with not less than 6.5 in Writing and 6.0 in the other sections. Internet TOEFL with 92 overall, with 21 in Listening, 22 in Reading, 24 in Speaking and 25 in Writing. For more information and alternative English language requirements, refer to page 156

Fees

Refer to pages 158-159 for information on fees

Further information

MA in American Studies: Critical Reading;

MPhil and PhD in American Literature

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MPhil and PhD in American History

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www.sussex.ac.uk/americanstudies

- American studies at Sussex was rated 1st in the UK for research in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). 95 per cent of our research was rated as recognised internationally or higher, and one-third rated as world leading.

- American studies at Sussex is ranked 3rd in the UK in *The Complete University Guide 2011-12*, 5th in the UK in *The Times Good University Guide 2012* and 6th in the UK in *The Guardian University Guide 2012*.

- American studies at Sussex offers flexibility and choice. For postgraduate students, we offer a taught MA in American Literature: Critical Reading, an MPhil in American History or Literature, and a wide range of expertise for the supervision of doctoral research in all aspects of the subject: literary, cultural, political and historical. MA students may also take courses from MA programmes in English.

- We have an active and friendly research culture at all levels, including regular open seminars with guest speakers, and frequent symposia and academic conferences.

- Particular strengths include race and ethnic relations, labour history and slavery, the American Civil War, discourses of migration, aesthetic modernism, modern poetry, popular culture and 20th-century writing.

- American studies at Sussex is home to the Marcus Cunliffe Centre for the Study of the American South and has close associations with the Centre for Modernist Studies, based here at the University. We also have close associations with the leading literary journal *Textual Practice* and with the interdisciplinary journal *Atlantic Studies*.

- All degrees may be undertaken on a part- or full-time basis.

Taught programme

MA in American Literature: Critical Reading 1 year full time/2 years part time

This MA is associated with the Centre for Modernist Studies (www.sussex.ac.uk/modernist) and the School of English.

This MA builds on the University's longstanding position as a leading UK centre for American studies in literature, history and cultural history. For many, the most exciting and radical developments in the poetry and fiction of the 20th century have come from American writers, while American culture has shaped the world.

The courses within this programme will:

- allow you to explore a variety of topics and literary forms in primarily 20th-century American writing but also with an interest in 19th-century American literature and notions of literature in its wider context
- introduce you to a range of critical paradigms alongside some iconic American texts
- trace developments from modernism to postmodernism in fiction and poetry
- explore the relation between economic structures and narrative form
- consider the literary and filmic representations of nationhood
- address the debate between culture, language and politics during the Great Depression.

Career opportunities

Our graduates have gone on to careers in teaching (schools, colleges and university), HR, journalism, the charity sector, broadcasting production, and administration in local and central Government. Some have gone on to posts such as insurance underwriter, marketing manager, and advertising copywriter. Employers of recent graduates include the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *The Independent* newspaper, and Channel 4.

Programme structure

Autumn and spring terms: you take Theory in Practice: Readings in Contemporary Theory and Literature, plus three of the following options: American Poetry after Modernism • Anglo-American Modernism: Poetry and Poetics • ImagiNation: the Great American Novel • Representing the Great Depression in Literature and Culture. Up to two options may be taken from related MA programmes.

Summer term and vacation: you undertake supervised work on the MA dissertation.

Assessment

You are assessed by four 5,000-word term papers and a dissertation of 15,000 words, for which you will receive one-to-one supervision.

Research programmes

Career opportunities

Our graduates have gone on to careers in teaching and tutoring, and also hold communications posts.

MPhil in American History or Literature 1-2 years full time/up to 4 years part time

An MPhil is a Masters-level research degree on a topic of your choice, achieved through personal research and the close guidance of an academic supervisor with relevant expertise. A highly flexible qualification, your MPhil can either be 'stand-alone' or, via an upgrade examination, can form part of doctoral-level work, extending your thesis further and leading to a PhD.

To facilitate greater autonomy and develop a range of appropriate skills, all MPhil students are normally required to take one or more research training courses during the first year of their study.

Recent MPhil thesis titles

Savage Desert, American Garden: Popular Imagery in the Selling of California, 1876-1929

Selective Amnesia: Truth and Reconciliation in the American South

Assessment

You are assessed by a 40,000-word thesis.

PhD

Research applications are actively sought in the following areas: 20th-century American poetry and fiction, literature and migration, autobiographical studies, popular culture, African-American literature and history, Southern history, the American Civil War era and Civil War memory, women's writing and feminist theory, and Atlantic world topics. Proposals on other or related topics are welcome.

Recent PhD thesis titles

Blank fiction: culture, consumption and the contemporary American novel

'City of refuge': Harlem and the urban aesthetic in 20th-century American literature

Colonialism 1590-1730: the racialisation of space

Do you see what I mean? An 'inner law of form' in Susan Howe's historicism

Myth and sites of resistance: the structuring of identity in contemporary US counter-discourse of race and gender

'Slavish pleasures and mechanical leisures': the problem of leisure in America during the 1930s

Technology, the public sphere and American writing since 1960

The short fiction of Joyce Carol Oates



An original Works Progress Administration (WPA) sign from the 1930s. The WPA was a huge part of the New Deal during the Great Depression, a subject covered in the option, *Representing the Great Depression in Literature and Culture*

Specialist facilities

American studies has formed an important part of the humanities at Sussex since the University was founded. Consequently, the University's Library has large holdings of serials and printed books relating to the US, plus electronic resources such as ECHO, and Early American Imprints.

Manuscript collections include:

- the Harvey Matusow Papers, covering the McCarthy hearings in the 1950s
- the Kenneth Allsop Papers, reflecting that author's interest in American society, literature and popular culture
- a series of letters from Margaret Mead to Geoffrey Gorer, exploring aspects of their shared interest in American national identity
- the Rosey Pool papers on African-American culture and history of the mid 20th century.

For the more advanced or specialised postgraduate student, the incomparable American holdings of the British Library and the Institute of Historical Studies – as well as London's other repositories of books, serials, manuscripts, films and the fine arts – are all within easy commuting distance of the University.

Academic activities

Open seminars in subjects related to the various Americanist topics – history, critical theory, English literature, lesbian and gay studies, international relations, postcolonialism – are scheduled in addition to the regular American studies seminar.

For the most up-to-date information, visit www.sussex.ac.uk/americanstudies

Faculty research interests

Stephen Burman International political economy; class and race in the US; international foreign policy. Currently working on a book on US foreign policy in the 1990s.

Robert Cook 19th- and 20th-century political and social history; the American Civil War and Civil War memory. Author of *Civil War Senator: William Pitt Fessenden and the Fight to Save the American Republic* (2010).

Sue Currell American literature and culture 1890-1940; 20th-century mass culture; the thirties; Taylorism/Fordism identity, language and the self. Author of *American Culture in the 1920s* (2009).

Richard Follett 19th-century US history; slavery; antebellum southern history; demography. Author of, with Eric Foner and Walter Johnson, *Slavery's Ghost: The Problem of Freedom in the Age of Emancipation* (2011).

Doug Haynes European and American modernism, postmodernism and avant-garde writing and culture. Publications on Thomas Pynchon, William Burroughs, and surrealism.

Daniel Kane 20th-century American literature; the avant-garde; poetry since the 1960s. Author of *'We Saw the Light': Conversations between the New American Cinema and Poetry* (2009).

Maria Lauret American feminist fiction and theory; race and ethnicity; women's autobiography. Author of *Wander Words: Language Migration in American Literature* (2011).

Jarod Roll Race, work and protest in the political economy of rural America, especially in the 20th century. Author of *Spirit of Rebellion: Labor and Religion in the New Cotton South* (2010).

Professor Clive Webb Refer to the History subject entry on page 106.