

# Macalester College American Studies Department Honors Program



## Overview

The American Studies Department at Macalester encourages students to undertake an honors project in their senior year by offering students the opportunity to pursue advanced work in the field through the Honors Program. Participation in the Honors Program involves the completion of a rigorous thesis on a scholarly issue of the student's choice. The program offers American Studies majors a chance to take an in-depth look at an issue important to the field and allows them to take their undergraduate work to a new level in terms of research and length. The department suggests that students begin planning for their honors projects in their junior year and advises them to begin work on it as early as is practical.

## The Thesis

The Thesis required for successful participation in the American Studies Honors Program is to be focused on a single scholarly subject in one of the department's three areas of emphasis: *Racial Concepts and Theories*; *Cultures, Histories and Practices*; and *Activism and Social Justice*. The department expects that the normal final product will be a substantial written thesis, which demonstrates independent critical thought and original research. It differs from a senior seminar paper (the normal capstone) in its breadth, depth, and scope. The senior capstone may not be used for this thesis. Typically, a thesis is composed of an introduction and several chapters, with the total length of the paper normally exceeding fifty pages. The paper must be backed up by well-documented research. The project is to be done in English. The honors project should be in the form of a typed thesis, but other formats may be used to support the thesis during the oral defense. Final projects may include literary scholarship or pedagogical studies and may be interdisciplinary in their approach.

A committee of three faculty members will evaluate each honors student. At least one committee member must come from the American Studies department. This committee will read the honors thesis and will engage the student in an oral discussion of her/his project. The committee will decide whether to recognize the student's work with "honors." The individual project advisor will be responsible for assigning the student a final letter grade for his/her independent study course.

## Eligibility

Participation is open to all Macalester College students who either have already completed an American Studies Major or will have completed one by the time they graduate (students must have declared a major in American Studies). Honors students must complete all regular requirements for the American Studies department degree. Before finishing the honors project, the student should have completed twelve courses in American Studies of which not more than eight credits are independent research courses. Participants must have maintained at least a 3.3 overall GPA.

All honors students must register for or have already taken AMST 400, the American Studies senior seminar.

Applications may be picked up and submitted at the American Studies Office in Humanities 114.

# **DEPARTMENTAL HONORS**

## **IN**

# **AMERICAN STUDIES**

## **Application**

*(Due May 1 of junior year for May graduates, December 1 of junior year for December graduates)*

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Honors Adviser \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Date of Graduation (Month/Year) \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Honors Thesis \_\_\_\_\_

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### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL (required)**

Please attach to this application cover sheet a three to five page summary of your proposed research. This proposal should include a preliminary review of the literature on the honors topic, a clear statement of the goals of the proposed work (i.e., hypotheses to be tested, or questions to be answered), an overview of the approach and methodology to be used (i.e., primary sources, data collection, data analysis), a statement as to the potential significance of your work (i.e., what new contributions might the proposed project make to our knowledge and understanding), and a bibliography of the references cited in the proposal. In addition, a final section needs to be included in the proposal in which the applicant describes his/her qualifications to undertake the proposed work (i.e., courses taken, research experience, outside background).

### **TRANSCRIPT (required)**

Please attach an updated copy of your transcript. Indicate on the transcript the American Studies courses you have taken to date, including those taken elsewhere.

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Signature of Student

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Signature of Faculty Adviser