The American Studies Department at Macalester College serves as the academic focal point for the study of race and ethnicity in a national and transnational frame. The department provides an interdisciplinary approach to the study of racial categories and racialized experiences in the United States by encouraging close and systematic examination of a wide range of cultural and political narratives, and by creating structured opportunities to apply theoretical concepts in concrete settings of civic engagement. American Studies is dedicated to incorporating various intellectual traditions and histories in a race-cognizant and interdisciplinary curriculum that is tuned in to the specific and concrete practices of everyday life. Students may major or minor in American studies.

Faculty


Karin Aguilar-San Juan, associate professor, is an urban sociologist with a special interest in Asian American studies. She is the recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowship and a Woodrow Wilson National Foundation Fellowship. She is the editor of The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s (South End Press, 1994), and author of Little Saigons: Staying Vietnamese in America (University of Minnesota Press, 2009) and The People Make the Peace: Lessons from the Vietnam Antiwar Movement, co-edited with Frank Joyce (Just World Books, 2015).

Jennifer Peacock is the Consortium for Faculty Diversity Predoctoral Fellow in American Studies. She will earn a PhD in American culture (Latina/o studies) from the University of Michigan in August 2016. Her dissertation is titled “In Plain Air: Rural Chicana/o Aesthetics and Spatialization, 1965–2000.”

Sample Cross-Listed Courses

As an interdisciplinary department, American Studies draws from many other departments.

Art and Art History: Race, Class and Gender in American Photography

Asian Languages and Cultures: Race and Ethnicity in Japan

Educational Studies: Re-envisioning Education and Democracy; Race, Culture and Ethnicity in Education

English: Topics in 20th-Century African American Literature; African American Literature 1900 to Present; Asian American Poetry

Environmental Studies: Environmental Justice

Geography: Urban Social Geography

Hispanic and Latin American Studies: Introduction to U.S. Latino Studies

History: Native American History; Race, Gender, and Science; Transgender History; The U.S.-Mexico Borderlands; Transatlantic Slave Trade

Media and Cultural Studies: Cultural Studies and the Media; Blackness and the Media

Music: American Pop, Rockabilly and Soul

Political Science: Politics and Inequality

Psychology: Understanding and Confronting Racism

Religious Studies: Martin and Malcolm

Theatre and Dance: Community-based Theater; Feminist Theater; Hip Hop Performance

Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Race, Sex and Work in the Global Economy; Sexuality, Race and Nation

Required Courses

AMST 101 Explorations of Race and Racism or AMST 103 The Problems of Race in U.S. Social Thought and Policy

AMST 200 Critical Methods in American Studies Research

AMST 300 Junior Civic Engagement Seminar: Where Theory Meets Practice

AMST 400 Senior Seminar

A credit-bearing internship of 2–4 credits

Sample Topics Courses

Culture and Theory of Women of Color Feminisms

Hunger Games: Map and Mirror for the 21st Century

Native American Cultural Revitalization

Race and the Law

Race, Cultural Politics and Social Movements

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

U.S. Imperialism: From the Philippines to Viet Nam
American Studies

Honors Projects
Luke Mielle '16 (Falcon Heights, Minn.), "Racial Uplift in a Jim Crow Local: Black Union Organizing in Minneapolis Hotels 1930–1940"

Kathryn Anastasi '15 (Rockville, Md.), "Ways We Remember: Rethinking Symbols of Italian American History and Imagining Alternative Narratives"

Abaki Beck '15 (Missoula, Mont.), "Decolonizing Healing, Decolonizing Mental Health: The Impacts of Settler-Colonialism on Blackfeet Youth Suicide"

Elisa Lee '15 (Fort Lee, N.J.), "Queering the 'Comfort Women': Coming Out Testimonials and Public Collective Memories"

Lucy Short '15 (St. Louis), "Haunted: Three Generations of Black Feminism"

Gabriella Deal-Marquez '12 (Veracruz, Mexico, and Milwaukee), "Transnational Bodies in Motion: Reframing Violence and Resistance in Mexican Performance and Chicano Theater"

Caroline Karanja '12 (Nairobi, Kenya, and Madison, Wis.), "The RED Revolution from the Perspective of Visual Cultural Studies: A New Chapter in Art, Commerce, and Corporate Social Responsibility"

Sample Study Abroad Opportunities
Ngan Nguyen '17 (St. Paul), Seoul, South Korea: CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange): Arts & Sciences in Seoul

Isaac Stewart-Silver '15 (Charlottesville, Va.), Chicago, Ill.: ACM (Associated Colleges of the Midwest); Chicago Program: Arts, Entrepreneurship, and Urban Studies

Wayne Lee '14 (San Francisco), Cuba: Sarah Lawrence College, SLC in Havana, University of Havana

Analiese Sigelko '14 (Madison, Wis.), Ecuador: HECUA (Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs); Community Participation & Social Change

Kiah Zellner-Smith '14 (Minneapolis), IES (Institute for the International Education) Abroad: Rio de Janeiro

Katie Hinkfuss '13 (Milwaukee), Guanajuato, Mexico; CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) Liberal Arts

Internships
Emily Vollbrecht '13 (White Bear Lake, Minn.), South Africa: Community Health and Social Policy, Durban

Samuel Doten '16 (Forest Lake, Minn.), Minnesota Legislature, Office on the Economic Status of Women, legislative intern

Ariana Feldman '16 (Arezzo, Italy), United Students Against Sweatshops, Washington, D.C., regional organizer

Grace Newton '16 (Middleton, Wis.), Cretin Durham Hall High School, National History Day youth mentor

Sara Pruitt '16 (Durham, N.C.), Young Playwrights'Theater in Washington, D.C., production intern

Cyrus Hair '15 (Savannah, Ga.), Minnesota Historical Society, ACTC (Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities) museum fellow and history day mentor

Molly Sir '15 (Nashville, Tenn.), Lawyers for Children in New York City, social work intern

Emma Stout '15 (Roseville, Minn.), Breakthrough St. Paul, teacher intern

Ilana Master '14 (Brooklyn, N.Y.), Trust Project, NARAL (National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League), Pro-Choice Minnesota, intern

Maya Vilaplana '14 (New York), Time, Inc., Content Solutions, editorial intern

Ricardo Millhouse '13 (Mobile, Ala.), Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM), urban studies

Fiona Kohrman '12 (Washington, D.C.), Hamline University, teaching assistant

After Macalester
Julia Gay '16 (Cleveland Heights, Ohio), is the Lake Street Arts! program assistant at Pangea World Theater in Minneapolis.

Grace Newton '16 (Middleton, Wis.) is the National History Day youth mentor at Cretin Durham Hall High School, St. Paul.

Carol Mejia '15 (Los Angeles) is the department coordinator for the American Studies Department at Macalester College.

Christine Ohenewah '15 (Mankato, Minn.) is pursuing a master's in international relations at the University of Chicago.

Ryan Brownlow '14 (White Settlement, Texas) is pursuing a PhD in communication studies at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill.

Jocelyne Cardona '14 (San Jose, Calif.) is working as a confidential assistant with the U.S. Department of Education at the White House in Washington, D.C.

Wayne Lee '14 (San Francisco) is the inclusion and engagement resource specialist with the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program.

Eric Goldfischer '13 (Havertown, Pa.) is pursuing a PhD program in geography at the University of Minnesota.

Lauren Elizabeth Johnson '13 (New Orleans) is teaching secondary education in New Orleans through Teach for America.

Ricardo Millhouse '13 (Mobile, Ala.) is pursuing a PhD in geography at Syracuse University.

Jade Johnson '12 (Brooklyn, N.Y.) is a graduate student in psychology at Columbia University.

Ramona McBee '12 (Santa Cruz, Calif.) is teaching English for Dirección de Lingüística e Intercambios Culturales (DILIC) in Quito, Ecuador.

Maya Weisinger '12 (Las Cruces, N.M.) is working for Breaking Free in Minneapolis through AmeriCorps.

Bimbola Akinbola '11 (Columbia, Mo.) is pursuing a PhD at the University of Maryland–College Park.

Natalie Owens–Pike '11 (Minneapolis) is executive director at Learning–Works at Blake in Minneapolis.

Kyera Singleton '11 (Clementon, N.J.) is pursuing a PhD at the University of Michigan.

Jeffrey Yamashita '11 (Honolulu) is pursuing a PhD in ethnic studies at the University of California–Berkeley.

Brittany Lewis '09 (Minneapolis) received her PhD in feminist studies and is a postdoctoral fellow at Bowdoin College.

Carmen Phillips '08 (Detroit) is pursuing a PhD in American studies at New York University.

Tsione Wolde-Michael '08 (St. Paul) is pursuing a PhD in history at Harvard University.

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