



---

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

American studies takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of American culture, identities and traditions in national and international contexts. Students can take courses in literature, history, film, women's studies, popular culture, electronic and digital media, race and immigration, ethnic studies, legal scholarship, journalism, politics and the environment. Our curriculum seeks to provide students with an educated awareness of the ways in which the United States frames the lives and perceptions of its peoples and examines how America is seen around the world. Students anticipating careers in law, public policy, communications, business, education and the entertainment industry typically enroll in the program.

### What makes the program distinctive?

Our major is characterized by strong faculty/student interaction and close mentoring of students. American studies created Brandeis' programs in women's and gender studies, legal studies, journalism, environmental

studies and film, and the program is deeply committed to interdisciplinary undergraduate teaching. Says Jillian M. '09, "Professor Cohen taught me how to think critically and analyze and interpret the world around me."

---

## FAST FACTS

**Current number of majors and minors:** 83

**Number of faculty:** 10

**Can you minor in this program?** No

**Emphasis within the major:** education; environmental studies; journalism and media studies; legal studies; popular culture; race and ethnicity; religion; U.S. history; women's history

**Popular second majors:** health: science, society and policy; history; politics; sociology

**Website:** [brandeis.edu/departments/amer\\_studies](http://brandeis.edu/departments/amer_studies)

## ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

American studies courses cover diverse aspects of the American experience from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Central framing ideas are presented in a group of core “Main Currents” courses and a two-semester sequence that surveys American traditions. Faculty teaching and research specializations include political and cultural history, environmental studies, legal studies, race and ethnicity, women’s and gender history, religion, sports, film and popular culture.

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

### Study abroad

American studies stresses the importance of studying America in comparison to other cultures. There are dozens of opportunities throughout the world to pursue American studies through an international lens. Popular destinations include Australia, England, Denmark, Spain, Germany and Israel.

### Internships

The interdisciplinary nature of American studies allows our students to intern in a wide range of fields, including law, government, publishing, journalism and the arts. Anneke R. ’13 recently completed an internship with the Huntington Theater Company’s summer Shakespeare program, and Hannah V. ’10 interned for The Boston Globe’s sports department.

### Student-run clubs

American studies students participate in a variety of campus clubs and activities. Many majors have been editors of the Brandeis newspapers, The Justice and The Hoot; others are involved in the Pre-Law Society and the Film Club.

### Other resources

The program hosts lectures and colloquia throughout the year, as well as field trips to area sites and institutions relevant to American studies. Recent destinations include Salem, Mass. (home of the Salem witch trials) and the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Mass.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

### Senior thesis

Students seeking a capstone intellectual experience can pursue a senior honors

thesis with a faculty adviser. American studies honors research has resulted in a variety of publications and conference presentations. Lauren S. ’11 recently presented a portion of her honors thesis, “Unraveling the Fabric of a Nation: Blue Jeans in American Culture,” at the New England American Studies Association’s annual conference.

### Faculty awards

Several faculty members have received Best Book awards, including Professor Joyce Antler for “You Never Call! You Never Write! A History of the Jewish Mother”; Thomas Doherty for “Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality and Insurrection in American Cinema 1930–1934”; and Brian Donahue for “The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord.” Professor Stephen Whitfield received the university’s Louis D. Brandeis Prize for Excellence in Teaching and the Brandeis Student Union Teaching Award. Professor Maura Jane Farrelly is the 2010 recipient of Brandeis’ Michael Walzer Prize for excellence in teaching.

## AFTER BRANDEIS

### Careers

Recent American studies graduates have gone on to positions such as social media manager for “PBS NewsHour”; online communications specialist at the Jewish Women’s Archive; law clerk for the Supreme Court of Israel; director of scheduling and advance for a U.S. congressman; founder of La Comedie Francaise, New York; and public relations specialist at Atlantic Records.

### Notable alumni

Janet Domentitz ’80 is president of the Consumer Federation of America and executive director of MASSPIRG; she was a founder of Earth Day Boston. Alison Kibler ’87 teaches American studies and chairs the women’s and gender studies program at Franklin and Marshall College. Marc Tyler Nobleman ’94 is the author of more than 70 books, most for young people; his book on the secret co-creator of Batman will be published in 2012.

*“American studies is one of the most revealing and intriguing courses of study on campus. I learned how to think about the world in a more advanced and comprehensive way, all the while discovering the reasons why America and Americans are the way they are.”*

Meghan M. ’10



Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Department, Brandeis University

Photo by Ken Schles

Office of Communications ©2011  
Brandeis University A168