



# AMERICAN CULTURE STUDIES PHD PROGRAM AT BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

## Introduction

The American Culture Studies program offers students the opportunity to critically explore the cultural and intellectual traditions that have historically shaped and defined American identity. The program challenges students to think of culture as a dynamic and contested domain, whose definition and deployment are negotiated in the context of complex power dynamics and struggles. It invites students to consider the role of mass media and mediated images of subjectivity in the formation of cultural identity. It also invites students to explore the ways in which American identity has been historically gendered and racialized in myths of nation-making, nationalism, and national identity. Additionally, we encourage students to consider these struggles over identity in their larger transnational and diasporic contexts. The American Culture Studies program is interdisciplinary and comparative in nature. It emphasizes the development of critical analytical and scholarly skills, and offers training to prepare students for academic and professional careers.

## Program Description

The PhD program in American Culture Studies is directed by an intellectual community made up of over sixty faculty members. The program features two broad interdisciplinary academic tracks from which students choose their major concentration: (1) Critical Studies in Media, Film, and Culture; and (2) Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Identities. These are designed to allow our students to be exposed to and to address contemporary cutting-edge research and debates in the field of Cultural Studies. They also reflect the unique academic strengths of our graduate faculty, who are deeply involved in interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary teaching and research. The American Culture Studies program includes faculty members from the following departments and graduate programs: Communication Studies, English, Ethnic Studies, History, Philosophy, Popular Culture, Sociology, Theatre/Film, and Women's Studies. Recognizing that American culture is complex and multifaceted, this program requires work in a variety of subject areas, encouraging students to reflect on both the historic heritage and contemporary expression of our national experiences.

## Institute for the Study of Culture & Society

The American Culture Studies PhD Program is closely affiliated with the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society, a research center on the BGSU campus whose primary goal is to promote scholarly and creative projects in the humanities and arts, as well as related areas of humanistic inquiry in the social sciences and education. The Institute provides our graduate students unique opportunities to work collaboratively with faculty and other students in a variety of academic research settings.

## Prerequisites for the PhD Program

Applicants for the PhD degree are expected to have earned an MA degree in an appropriate subject area, to have a superior academic record at both the undergraduate and master's degree levels, and to meet the minimum academic and other admission requirements established by the Graduate College. Applicants presenting other credentials will be evaluated on an individual basis and may be required to remove any deficiencies in their background by taking specific graduate courses recommended by the American Culture Studies PhD Executive Committee. Applicants are encouraged to visit the campus for an interview whenever possible.

## Application for Admission

The following materials must be submitted to the BGSU Graduate College: (a) the completed Graduate College Application for Admission form—available online at: <http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/gradcol/admissions1.htm> (b) two official transcripts from each college or university you have attended, (c) scores for the General Test of the Graduate Record Examination. Foreign students are required to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) examination or its equivalent.

The following materials must be submitted to the American Culture Studies program office in support of his/her application: (a) three letters of recommendation from current or former instructors or other persons qualified to evaluate probable success in the doctoral program; (b) evidence of ability to conduct academic research in an interdisciplinary area, such as copies of research papers or MA thesis chapters; (c) a two-four page statement of purpose delineating the applicant's purpose for taking the PhD as well as an outline of career goals; (d) a current one-two page resume or cv; (e) an American Culture Studies PhD Applicant Information Form—available online at: <http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/apply.htm> Applications and supporting materials should be received by February 1 to receive fullest consideration.

All non-American (international) applications must be processed through the BGSU Center for International Programs, which may be reached at the following web address: <http://international.bgsu.edu/>

## General Requirements

Requirements for the doctorate in American Culture Studies are: (1) the completion of at least 70 semester hours beyond the master's degree; (2) including a maximum of 16 hours of credit for research on the dissertation. The PhD program contains the following components:

- (1) **Common Core Requirement (13 hours):** *Theories of American Culture Studies, Genealogy of American Culture,*

*Publication and Professional Development, Key Debates in Cultural Studies.*

- (2) **Interdisciplinary Major Concentration (21 hours):** Either (a) *Critical Studies in Film, Media, and Culture*, or (b) *Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Identities*.
- (3) **Minor Concentration (12 hours):** Either a disciplinary minor, such as Communication Studies, English, History, etc., or an interdisciplinary minor, such as Film Studies, Museum/Archival Studies, etc., or a graduate certificate program, such as those in Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, Performance Studies, etc.
- (4) **Electives: (8 hours):** Chosen by the student from a variety of courses, including pedagogical seminars, lecture series, and other topics of individual interest.
- (5) **Dissertation Research (16 hours):** Including a 3 hour seminar in *Dissertation Research and Writing*.
- (6) **Professional Activity**  
During their course of study in the PhD program, students are encouraged and expected to participate in a range of professional activities aimed at preparing them to successfully compete on the academic job market. These include such activities as presenting papers at professional conferences and professional publication in scholarly journals and edited volumes. The ACS Program assists students in the pursuit of these scholarly activities through offering financial aid to offset the cost of travel to conferences and registration.

#### **Preliminary Examination**

Successful completion of the Preliminary Examination, which is given in the Fall semester of the third year of full-time study, is required for formal advancement to PhD candidacy. The preliminary examination is intended to test the student's mastery of the content, theories, and methodologies covered in the American Culture common core required courses and in the student's interdisciplinary major area of concentration.

#### **Dissertation**

The dissertation topic should be consistent with the candidate's planned profession and is subject to the approval of the ACS PhD Executive Committee. The dissertation is the culmination of the candidate's academic study, and should make a contribution to the candidate's academic area of study. American Culture Studies dissertations normally employ an interdisciplinary methodology. Doctoral committees in the American culture program will consist at a minimum, of three affiliated faculty members from the American Culture Studies Program and a representative of the Graduate College. Other appropriate faculty, including faculty from other institutions, may be included with the approval of the ACS PhD Executive Committee.

#### **Financial Aid**

Financial aid is available to qualified students in American Culture Studies for up to four years in the form of Graduate Assistantships in teaching, research, or administration. Graduate Assistantships at the PhD level offer an academic year stipend of about \$11,600 plus waiver of tuition and fees. Additional summer funding is available on a limited basis.

#### **Typical Course of Study**

##### **Fall, 1<sup>st</sup> year:**

ACS 602-Teaching American Culture Studies  
ACS 730-Theories of American Culture Studies  
ACS 680-Popular Culture and Media Theory

Or

ETHN 620-Theories of Race, Ethnicity, Multiculturalism  
Major/Minor Course  
Pedagogical Seminar

##### **Spring, 1<sup>st</sup> Year:**

ACS 740-Genealogy of American Culture  
ACS 760-Critical Approaches in Film Studies

Or

WS 620-Feminist Theory  
Major/Minor Course

##### **Summer, 1<sup>st</sup> Year:**

Major Course  
Major/Minor/Elective Course

##### **Fall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year:**

ACS 745-Publication and Professional Development  
Major Course  
Minor Course

##### **Spring, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year:**

ACS 750-Key Debates in Cultural Studies  
Major Course  
Minor Course

##### **Summer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year:**

ACS 798-Readings for the Preliminary Exam  
Major/Minor/Elective Course

##### **Fall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year:**

ACS 799-Dissertation Hours

##### **Spring, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year:**

ACS 782-Dissertation Workshop  
ACS 799-Dissertation Hours

##### **Fall and Spring, 4<sup>th</sup> Year:**

ACS 799-Dissertation Hours

For more information, visit:

<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/>

or contact:

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