

# UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT CANTERBURY

## Centre for American Studies

**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes the programme. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found [ *either* by following the links provided *or* in the programme handbook]. The accuracy of the information contained in this specification is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

### **BA American Studies (History) (Teaching departments: English; History; Film & Visual Arts)**

<b>1. Awarding Institution/Body</b>	University of Kent
<b>2. Teaching Institution</b>	University of Kent at Canterbury
<b>3. Teaching Site</b>	Canterbury Campus
<b>4. Programme accredited by:</b>	
<b>5. Final Award</b>	BA (Hons)
<b>6. Programme</b>	American Studies (History)
<b>7. UCAS code (or other code)</b>	T701
<b>8. Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group/s</b>	American Studies/Area Studies
<b>9. Date of production/revision</b>	December 2001-April 2002
<b>10. Applicable cohort/s</b>	2002 entry

#### **11. Educational Aims of the Programme**

The programme aims to:

- provide an excellent quality of higher education.
- encourage flexibility and multidisciplinary in the study of the United States
- provide teaching informed by research and scholarship about the United States.
- meet the lifelong needs of a diversity of students
- build on close ties within Europe with the United States through its 'year abroad' of study
- produce graduates of value to the region and the nation, in possession of key skills, enabling students to develop their capacity to learn, prepared for employment or further study.
- provide learning opportunities that are enjoyable experiences, involve realistic workloads, are pedagogically based within a research-led framework and offer appropriate support for students from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- provide high quality teaching in good environments with appropriately qualified and trained staff from a range of disciplines related to American Studies.
- introduce students to the history, culture and politics of the United States, and encourage them to identify and develop their own interests and expertise in fields of the humanities
- develop independent critical thinking and judgement in its students, particularly in relation to American topics.
- develop a 'synthesising impulse...which can work across, as well as interrogate traditional discipline boundaries in innovative ways' (SB)
- introduce students to Area Studies, in an era of globalisation and multiculturalism (SB)

#### **The programme aims to:**

1. Develop an understanding of the culture and history of the United States
2. Develop multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary understanding of American culture and history
3. Provide a flexible but structured degree, with the opportunity to study abroad

## 12. Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the subject benchmarking statement for Area Studies (**SB**).

### Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

#### Knowledge and Understanding

##### A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. the history of the U.S. from colonial times to the twentieth-century
2. historiographical practice
3. the study of history in relation to other disciplines
4. terminology used in historical writing
5. 'the similarities and differences between areas, thus fostering cross-cultural and international perspectives' (SB)
6. texts and other source materials, read both critically and empathetically while addressing questions of genre, content, perspective and purpose (SB)
7. the problems inherent in the historical record itself, and the limits within which interpretation is possible (SB)

##### Teaching/learning

As an area studies programme, the emphasis of the degree is multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary. 'Teaching, learning and assessment styles will consequently flow from those disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches that make up specific programmes' (SB). Variety is central; teaching and learning develops 'graduates who are able to take a variety of approaches in their studies, to acquire skills in integrating and synthesising materials from diverse sources' (SB)

##### Assessment

Assessment is primarily through

- Essays and dissertations
- Presentations in class
- Examinations
- Dissertations specifically framed by an interdisciplinary methodology

'Among the variety of assessment styles utilised it is likely that students will have ample opportunities to display the capacity to employ and/or integrate different subject approaches, area-based materials and information sources in constructive, thoughtful and critical ways' (SB). The final year 'Bridge' course (HI500) and the final year dissertation are explicitly based on these premises, and assess students according to their ability to integrate and combine these different approaches and materials.

#### Skills and Other Attributes

##### B. Intellectual skills:

8. Application of the skills needed for academic study and enquiry
9. Evaluation of research findings
10. Ability to synthesise information from a number of sources in order to gain a coherent understanding of critical theory and general methodology
11. Ability to make discriminations and selections of relevant information from a wide source and large body of knowledge
12. Exercise of problem-solving skills

**C. Subject-specific skills:**

13. enhanced skills in the close critical analysis of historical documents
14. informed understanding of the variety of critical and theoretical approaches to the study of history
15. ability to articulate knowledge and understanding of texts, concepts and theories relating to historical studies
16. appropriate scholarly practice in the presentation of formal written work
17. ability to understand a multi-disciplinary academic subject, with its array of literature, history and other discourses
18. ability to *combine* various academic discourses (eg. Literature and history) in order to forge an inter-disciplinary understanding
19. ability to construct an independent, research-led argument, marked by an inter-disciplinary pedagogy

**D. Transferable skills:**

20. communication: organise information clearly; respond to written sources; present information orally; adapt style for different audiences; use of images as a communication tool
21. the ability to assimilate and organise substantial quantities of complex information of various kinds (particularly strengthened by an interdisciplinary degree)
22. Information Technology: produce written documents; undertake online research; communicate using e-mail; process information using databases
23. working with others: define and review the work of others; work co-operatively on group tasks; understand how groups function
24. improving own learning: explore personal strengths and weaknesses; time management; review working environment (especially student-staff relationship); develop specialist learning skills (e.g. interdisciplinarity); develop autonomy in learning
25. problem solving: identify and define problems; explore alternative solutions and discriminate between them

### 13. Programme structures and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The BA (Hons) in American Studies (Literature) is available in a full-time programme. It involves three years' study at the University of Kent, plus a further year (the third year) in a US institution. This exchange programme features a range of institutions, including: California (various campuses), Massachusetts, Indiana, Purdue, South Carolina, SUNY-Buffalo. Study at the university is organised in 2 x 12-week terms (Periods 1 & 2), and a final six week term used for examining (30 weeks in total). In the first year all students take EN303, HI341 and HI354, and in the final year all students take the interdisciplinary 'bridge' course, HI500. In the second and fourth years students write independent essays on an American topic; in the second year this is single discipline, and in the final year interdisciplinary. Outside these 'core' requirements, students choose from a range of courses that reflect the American and the historical aspects of the degree.

The structure of the programme and the modules which make it up, their levels, credits and the terms in which they are taught, are shown below.

Code	Title	Level	Credits	Term/s
<b>Year 1</b>				
<b>Required Modules</b>				
*EN303	Introduction to American Studies	C	15	1 & 2
HI341	The Birth of a Nation: The American Revolution 1760s-1790	C	15	1
HI354	America in Upheaval: the 1960s	C	15	2
<b>Recommended Modules</b>				
EN308	Romanticism and Critical Theory	C	15	1 & 2
PO301	The Study of Politics and Government	C	15	1 & 2
HA301	Introduction to History and Theory of Art: Genres	C	15	1
HA300	The Historiography of Art	C	15	2
FI303	Introduction to Narrative Cinema	C	15	1 & 2
<b>Year 2</b>				
<b>Required Modules</b>				
*HI559	Second Year American Studies Extended Essay	I	15	1 & 2
HI621	Modern American: The US since 1880	I	15	2
HI637	From Revolution to Reconstruction: America 1760-1880	I	15	1
<b>Recommended Modules</b>				
EN557	Nineteenth Century American Literature	I	15	1
EN558	American Modernisms	I	15	2
PO520	Contemporary Politics and Government in the USA	I	15	1 & 2
FI530	Topics in American Cinema I	I	15	2
FI531	Topics in American Cinema II	I	15	1
HA501	The American Image – Aspects of American Painting 1700-1980	I	15	1 & 2
<b>*Year 3</b>				
During the Third Year students take courses in the U.S. as part of their 'year abroad', usually classed at levels 300 and 400. This year abroad cannot be compensated or condoned.				
<b>Year 4</b>				
<b>Required Modules</b>				
*HI500	The American Century?	H	15	1 & 2
HI560	Fourth Year American Studies Extended Essay	H	15	1 & 2
<b>Recommended Modules</b>				
HI532/3	United States Supreme Court in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	H	30	1 & 2

HI626	African-American Thought and Culture	H	15	1
HI656/7	The Civil Rights and Black Power Eras in the United States c.1945-1968	H	30	1 & 2

Please note that all modules may be subject to change, and that the list of recommended modules is a selection of what is on offer.

#### 14. Support for Students and Their Learning

- Induction programme for Humanities students
- Handbooks: subject, Faculty and “Year Abroad” handbooks
- Library/skills package: special session for American Studies students (2002 onwards)
- Student:staff ratio c.20
- Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching: Student Learning Advisory Service offers seminars and workshops on study skills etc.
- Academic support system
- American Studies Senior Tutor (responsible for pastoral and academic care of American Studies undergraduates)

#### 15. Entry Profile

##### Entry Route

For fuller information, please refer to the University prospectus.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minimum requirements:</b></li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must be at least 17 years old by 20 September in the year you begin your programme. There is no upper age limit to studying.</li> <li>• Five GCSE passes, including English Language or Use of English, and at least two subjects at A level. See Curriculum 2002 for details of our minimum requirements for the new AS levels tariff.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A levels and AS levels:</b></li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three passes at GCE A level and a pass in English Language or Use of English. (Subject will be counted at only one level.) Current (2002) offer: 280 points (‘B’ at History ‘A’ level)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>VCE A level (previously AGNVQ)</b></li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational A level (Double award 12 units) and a pass in an approved English Language qualification.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Access/Foundation Programmes:</b></li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A satisfactory pass in an approved Foundation or Access programme. Please check with the University beforehand that we will accept the Access/Foundation syllabus you took.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BTEC National Certificates/Diplomas:</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTEC National Diploma and a pass in an approved English language qualification.</li> <li>• Higher National Diploma and a pass in an approved English language qualification.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Certificate in Education</b></li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Certificate in Education gained after a full three-year course at a college of education in the United Kingdom.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Irish Leaving Certificate:</b></li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passes in five Higher level subjects at one sitting plus Ordinary level English grade C.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scottish qualifications:</b></li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five passes in approved subjects at Advanced Higher or Higher grade and a pass at Intermediate 2 grade in English Language.</li> <li>• Four passes in approved subjects at Advanced Higher or Higher grade and two approved subjects at Intermediate 2 grade, one of which must be English Language.</li> </ul>  |

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>University Degree</b></li> <li>• <b>Mature applicants:</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of a degree course including all the required examinations at a university in the United Kingdom or at another approved university.</li> <li>• If you are a mature student without the traditional qualifications listed here, we ask you for proof of any recent study you have done or of your ability to complete a degree programme successfully.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>International applicants:</b></li> </ul>	<p>In addition to the above requirements international students can also qualify with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Certificates and Higher School Certificates awarded by a body approved by the University. Subsidiary level credit or pass = pass at GCSE, Higher School Certificate pass = pass at A level.</li> <li>• Matriculation from an approved university, with a pass in English Language at GCSE/O level or an equivalent level in an approved English language test.</li> <li>• Passing one of Kent’s Foundation Programmes, provided that you meet the subject requirements for the degree course you intend to study.</li> <li>• An examination pass accepted as equivalent to any of the above.</li> </ul> <p>In order to enter directly onto a degree programme you also need to demonstrate your proficiency in English, and we ask for one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average 6.5 in IELTS test, minimum 6.0 in reading and writing.</li> <li>• Grade B in Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English.</li> <li>• Grade A in Cambridge Advanced Certificate in English.</li> <li>• Pass overall in the JMB/NEAB Test in English for Overseas Students, with at least B in Writing, Reading and Speaking modules.</li> <li>• A TOEFL score of at least 580 (written test) or 237 (computer test).</li> </ul> <p>If you haven’t yet reached those standards the University runs a Foundation Programme for international students, which gives you a year’s academic and language training before you begin on your degree.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL):</b></li> <li>• <b>Other Qualifications:</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will consider any evidence you have of previous study and your ability to follow your proposed programme.</li> <li>• International Baccalaureate Diploma</li> <li>• European Baccalaureate Diploma</li> <li>• Advanced International Certificate of Education</li> <li>• Advanced Placement</li> <li>• Overseas Certificates (including other European Union countries)</li> <li>• The Higher School Certificate of Matriculation of approved overseas and EU authorities</li> <li>• American High School Diplomas if accompanied by Advanced Placements (AP) passes.</li> <li>• UKC considers other qualifications similar to the ones listed above, provided they include a pass in English Language at GCSE/O level or equivalent.</li> </ul>

**What does this programme have to offer?**

- A grounding in literary studies, particularly the literature of the United States
- An opportunity to live in a foreign culture and to work in a foreign university
- The development of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary modes of critical analysis, cutting across a number of traditional academic subjects
- The opportunity to combine a structured common curriculum with the independent research and thought guaranteed by dissertations

The ability to develop literary and analytical skills, notably those demanded by well-constructed, independently-minded essays.

**Personal Profile**

You should have

- A lively interest in history, especially the history of the United States
- A willingness to explore new areas of the past, to extend and deepen your knowledge of the history of Britain and the United States
- A willingness to think flexibly across subject boundaries
- A readiness to develop new study skills, especially in the use of information and communication technology

**16. Methods for evaluating and enhancing the quality and standards of teaching and learning****Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards**

- Student evaluations
- Annual reports – specifically Annual Subject Monitoring Report
- External examiners' reports
- Periodic programme review
- External accreditation
- Annual staff appraisal
- Peer review of teaching 'Team teaching' of HI500 brings literature and history teachers together in the seminar room: continual review and enhancement of teaching methods
- QAA subject review
- Director of Centre for American Studies also acts as Director of Learning and Teaching for this degree programme
- Unit for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching provides briefings on enhancing quality
- Kent Quality Management and Enhancement network

**Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards**

- American Studies Staff/Student Consultative Committee
- Centre for American Studies (meets twice a term: Director reports to the Centre as 'Director of Learning and Teaching')
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee
- Learning and Teaching Board
- Board of Examiners

**Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience**

- Student evaluations
- Staff/Student Consultative Committee
- Student representation on meetings of Centre for American Studies
- Student representation on other Faculty Committees

**Staff development priorities include:**

- Minimum expected qualification for appointment
- PGCHE requirements
- Staff appraisal scheme
- Staff development courses
- Professional body requirements
- Development of peer review schemes
- Research seminars
- Conferences (with funding support available from the Centre)

**17. Indicators of quality and standards**

- Results of 1998 TQA: '21 points'
- 1998 TQA: 12 teaching sessions (out of 12) rated 'excellent'
- Degree results: in 2001 81.3% of students gained 2.1/First Class degrees; in 2002 77.8% of students gained 2.1/First Class degrees
- Reports from External Examiners which regularly express satisfaction with the degree
- Students enter a wide range of jobs, and our graduates have a low rate of unemployment
- Reports from External Examiners which regularly express satisfaction with the degree
- Programme Review (May 2002), where the Centre was widely praised for the coherence of its programmes

**The following reference points were used in creating these specifications:**

- Benchmarking statement (Area Studies) – “Phase 2” document (2002)
- University Plan/Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Handbooks
- British Association for American Studies: newsletters, e.g. no.84 (2001): 'Benchmarking American Studies'
- University Code of Practice

Programme Specification  
Annex 1

GJR/ljb  
April 2002  
Revised July 2002