American Studies programs individuals learn about the different cultures and subcultures in our society. Programs focus on the study of the history of America and the competing stories about its discovery. Courses from different fields of study, such as art, sociology, and economics will make up the curriculum. Individuals may also study different religions and philosophic movements that are prominent in America, including Christianity, Judaism, and the New Age movement. Overall, courses will teach individuals how to analyze information and how to ask different questions about contemporary problems and issues.

The program at Montana State University draws on the cultural resources of the Museum of the Rockies, Yellowstone National Park, and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and upon the strength and diversity of the departments in the College of Arts and Architecture and the College of Letters and Sciences, the American Studies program provides a richly interdisciplinary curriculum for both graduate and undergraduate students. American Studies offers challenging and diverse opportunities to study the history, people, cultures, and institutions of the United States in interdisciplinary courses. The curriculum combines the study of history with literature, and the arts. Through rigorous coursework and within an interdisciplinary learning community, students gain essential academic and life skills necessary both for success in the workplace and for responsible citizenship. Students in this program can choose one of the following focus areas: American Arts explores the creative role of music, film, and popular culture in shaping American values, desires, tastes, and behavior. Individuals are invited to examine the ways in which the visual arts have shaped, and are a product of, the social, economic, and political developments that have defined the American experience. American History offers a broad understanding of the interplay of culture, society, and political change in America's past, present, and future. This focus area also explores how present day problems are contingent on past actions and belief systems. American Literature exposes students to poetry and prose, fictional and dramatic works of representative American writers. They will acquire an understanding of critical approaches to the study of literature, and of the relationship between culture and literary studies.

Characteristics associated with success include curiosity about history and culture, an interest in the American form of language, a desire to explore the ethnic and regional differences which make up the United States, a strong curiosity about when, where, why, and how historical events took place, about the differences in societies, and about the relationship between the past and the present.

Individuals should:
- have good oral and written communication skills
- have the ability to read carefully and think creatively and critically
- be interested in the Americas and its people
- want to learn about other cultures
- be good at synthesizing different topics of information
- self-motivated and directed
- flexible and persistent
- able to interact with all kinds of people
- able to make informed decisions
- be intrigued by new ideas and ways of thinking
- enjoy solving complex problems in new and creative ways
- enjoy reading and writing
- be poised and independent
- enjoy interaction with people of different cultures and values, and be able to get along well with others
- be creative
- be patient, tactful, and persuasive
**American Studies**

**Related occupations include**:  
- Teacher  
- Critic (Book/Theater)  
- Editor  
- Archivist/Curator  
- Antiques/Art Dealer  
- Archaeologist  
- Artist  
- Librarian  
- Lobbyist  
- Political Scientist  
- Public Affairs Officer  
- College/University Faculty  
- Park Ranger  
- Diplomat  
- Foreign Service Officer  
- Ecologist  
- Project Manager  
- Historian  
- Anthropologist  
- Legislator  
- Journalist  
- Education Director  
- Personnel Specialist  
- Writer/Author  
- Lobbyist  
- Public Administrator  
- Urban Planner  
- Business, general  
- Lender  
- Mediator  
- Government Administrator  
- Banker  
- Insurance Agent/Underwriter

**Please note:** The American Studies program began in 2005 and to date has graduated 0 classes. Therefore, information and data specific to Montana State University graduates is limited and will be updated as it is obtained.

**Other Sources of Information:**  
The American Studies Association: [www.theasa.net](http://www.theasa.net)  
American Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian: [www.folklife.si.edu](http://www.folklife.si.edu)  
Folklife Center, Library of Congress: [www.loc.gov/folklife](http://www.loc.gov/folklife)  
American Folklore Society: [http://www.afsnet.org](http://www.afsnet.org)  
University College—American Studies, Montana State University: [http://www.montana.edu/amst/](http://www.montana.edu/amst/)

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2. Montana State University, University College—American Studies  
3. Montana State University Career & Internship Services