



## American Studies Internship Syllabus

American Studies Department  
Saint Louis University  
amstdies@slu.edu / (314) 977-2911

B.A. students – ASTD 4910  
M.A. students – ASTD 5910  
Ph.D. students – ASTD 6910

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### Introduction and Objectives

Imagine opening a court document that was sealed in the nineteenth century in order to conserve and record its contents, carefully plying through boxes of artifacts from the 1904 World's Fair to prepare them for an exhibit, working with a neighborhood organization in St. Louis to create a community garden, or performing outreach to help a labor alliance promote immigrant workers' rights. These are just some of the exciting and important activities that students have engaged in through internships developed within the Department of American Studies.

As the examples above suggest, experiential learning challenges students to expand their knowledge beyond the classroom by performing dedicated work off campus. The goal is to build connections between what students do in their American Studies courses and the practical and intellectual challenges that exist outside of those courses. When carefully designed and organized, internships offer opportunities to build applied experience and skills while connecting in a sustained and meaningful way with the mission of the American Studies Department and that of Saint Louis University. The course objectives for American Studies internships are as follows:

1. To provide a framework for students to develop applied projects consistent with American Studies concerns, themes, and methods of inquiry.
2. To support students in undertaking self-directed and self-organized work.
3. To apply American Studies theories and methods within practical work environments.
4. To develop research, critical analysis, and writing skills.

For undergraduate American Studies majors, an internship offers one of the two routes for satisfying the major's *experiential learning component*. For undergraduate American Studies minors, an internship may be taken as an elective option toward completion of the minor. And for graduate students (M.A. or Ph.D.), an internship is a popular elective course, working to fulfill the coursework requirements for a graduate degree.

## **Procedure**

Students should prepare for their internships by meeting with the American Studies internship director no later than October 15th for an upcoming spring semester project and no later than March 30th for an upcoming fall semester project. Once students have identified the organization with which they would like to work, they should obtain and complete all forms required by that organization. They will then complete the Internship Application and Agreement form in conjunction with the host organization and the American Studies internship director. The completed form ought to define clearly the purposes, goals, and anticipated outcomes of the internship. This agreement requires a minimum of fifty hours at the internship site per credit earned—or ten hours per week (150 hours total) for a semester-long 3-credit internship course—and the production by the student of three quarterly written reports and one final written report.

Under University policy, any student engaged in an internship for credit must be signed up for the relevant SLU course number (ASTD 4910 for B.A. students, 5910 for M.A. students, and 6910 for Ph.D. students) by the internship start date. No student may conduct an internship during one time span while taking the corresponding course credits during another time span (e.g. a summer internship with associated course credits taken during the fall), except when a student is continuing internship work to clear a grade of Incomplete from a previous semester's internship course.

Requirements and policies affecting students undertaking American Studies internships are further described in the section titled Departmental Internship Policies and Requirements, found in Part VI of the Internship Application and Agreement form.

## **Evaluation**

The faculty internship director will evaluate the student's work in consultation with the student and the organization supervisor. The faculty member's evaluation will be based on the student's completion of ten on-site hours per week throughout the semester (for a 3-credit internship course), including tasks and projects assigned by the site supervisor, as well as on the periodic reports submitted by the student and the final evaluation submitted by the supervisor. After reviewing and assessing these materials, the internship director will assign a grade using the standard SLU letter-grade scale.

## **Examples**

Students have worked in the Missouri History Museum's collections, conducting research on artifacts for use in upcoming exhibits. They have conserved and catalogued a trove of documents for the Circuit Court Records project. They have worked with a bicycle repair and arts program for children in Old North St. Louis. They have researched and delivered historical tours of St. Louis for the women-owned and -operated company Renegade STL. They have supported the degree completion of under-resourced students through the nonprofit College Bound. They have written letters advocating for the rights of immigrants and refugees at the International Institute. They have developed grant proposals to support the Radio Arts Foundation. They have worked to promote Community Forward, a Ferguson, Missouri, nonprofit organized to advance livability and economic empowerment across municipal boundaries in North St. Louis County. They have conducted research on historically significant architecture for the Preservation Research Office. These are just a few examples of the kinds of creative internships developed by recent undergraduate and graduate students in American Studies.

## Possible Sites

St. Louis has rich set of institutions and community organizations to consider as host sites. Students are welcome and encouraged to make their own arrangements and explore innovative new projects that support their learning goals and interests in American Studies. Possible sites include:

Beyond Housing	KETC-TV Channel 9
Black Leadership Roundtable	Landmarks Association of St. Louis
Building Arts Foundation	Laumeier Sculpture Park
Campbell House Museum	Missouri Arts Foundation
Catholic Charities of St. Louis	Missouri Botanical Gardens
Circuit Court Records Project	Missouri Historical Society
The City Museum	Missouri Trust for Public Land
College Bound	Old North St. Louis Restoration Group
Community Forward, Inc.	Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts
The Contemporary Art Museum	Radio Arts Foundation
Cupples House Museum	Renegade STL
DeMenil Mansion	St. Louis Art Museum
East-West Gateway Coordinating Council	St. Louis Cultural Resources Office
FOCUS St. Louis	St. Louis Parks Department
Gateway Greening Alliance	St. Louis Planning and Design Agency
International Institute	St. Louis Public Library
Jefferson Barracks	St. Louis Science Center
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial	St. Louis Zoo
Jobs with Justice	The Sheldon Arts Foundation
Joplin House Museum	Trailnet, Inc.
KDHX 88.1 FM Community Radio	Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site