

# AMERICAN STUDIES INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY™

— EST. 1818 —

## DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN STUDIES

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## 1.) Introduction, Objectives, and Site Examples

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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 our campus's boundaries.

When carefully designed and organized, internships offer opportunities to build applied experience and skills. They also help students connect in a sustained and meaningful way with the mission of the American Studies department to "encourage students to engage in the world around them and to reflect ethically on the problems and issues addressed in the classroom."

For undergraduate American Studies majors, an internship offers one of the two routes for satisfying the major's *Community Engagement* component. (The other route is an approved service-learning class taken for American Studies credit.) For undergraduate minors, an internship may be taken as an elective option toward completion of the minor. For graduate students (MA or PhD level), an internship is a popular elective course, serving to meet coursework requirements while providing preparation for career paths in community work, public humanities, advocacy positions, public service, and related areas.

### Course objectives

The course objectives for American Studies internships are:

- To create a framework for students to develop applied projects consistent with American Studies concerns, themes, and methods of inquiry
- To prepare students to undertake self-directed and self-organized work

- To help students to apply American Studies theories and methods within practical work environments
- To provide venues for students to develop skills in applied research, critical analysis, and writing

For undergraduate American Studies majors, an internship also works to fulfill Student Learning Outcome 5 from the learning outcomes the department has adopted for the major:

- Students will synthesize knowledge gleaned from American Studies coursework with surrounding communities and public life, particularly in service of questions of social justice and solidarity.
  - Students will combine their classroom knowledge with internships, service learning, or community-based research projects.
  - Students will integrate academic with practical and vernacular knowledge and apply their skills in the service of others.

## Potential host sites

St. Louis has rich collection of institutions and community organizations to consider as host sites. (A list of local examples appears in Appendix II below.) Or, if you'll be away from St. Louis during the summer or a particular semester, you're free to propose a host site in another part of the country or world, just as many of our students have done in the past.

Generally, American Studies internship students follow one of two paths in choosing a host organization. The first is working with institutions in the public humanities. For instance, numerous American Studies students have undertaken projects in the Missouri History Museum's collections, conducting research on artifacts, promoting events, and assessing exhibit design. Others conserved and catalogued a trove of documents for the Circuit Court Records project. Students have spearheaded oral history projects with immigrants and refugees through the International Institute of St. Louis and they have developed grant proposals for the Radio Arts Foundation. Others have researched and delivered historical tours of St. Louis for the company Renegade STL or conducted research on historically significant architecture for the Preservation Research Office.

A second path commonly chosen by American Studies internship students is working with groups focused on community development and social-justice

organizing. For example, several students partnered with a bicycle repair and arts program for children in Old North St. Louis. Our students have supported the degree completion of under-resourced students through the nonprofit College Bound and they have promoted racial justice in the region's criminal justice system by taking on communications tasks for ArchCity Defenders. Some have assisted Community Forward, a Ferguson, Missouri, nonprofit organizing for economic empowerment across municipal boundaries in North St. Louis County, while others have produced analyses of racial and class inequities in regional public-school funding for the nonprofit group A Red Circle.

These are just a few examples of the creative local internships developed by recent undergraduate and graduate students in American Studies—not to mention the host of inventive internships our students have arranged at institutions in cities other than St. Louis. Our faculty internship supervisor will be happy to speak with you about organizations whose missions match your own passions and interests.

## 2.) Rules and Guidelines

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The guidelines below apply to all students seeking to take an American Studies internship for course credit. Please read them carefully and direct any questions to the faculty internship supervisor.

### Eligibility

To undertake an internship for American Studies course credit, you must be a BA student (i.e., a declared major or minor), MA student, PhD student, or MA-to-PhD student in SLU's Department of American Studies. You also need to meet all eligibility requirements set by the host organization. Your participation requires the consent of both the American Studies faculty internship supervisor and the host organization.

Depending on the agreement reached between you and the host organization, your internship may be paid or unpaid; both types are equally eligible for American Studies course credit. However, except in special situations as determined by the faculty internship supervisor, an internship cannot be performed under the direction of your regular employer or in a job in which you have been or are currently employed. An internship will not be arranged, nor will credit be given, for previously completed work or internship experience.

If you've already taken an internship for credit toward your American Studies degree, you'll only be permitted to sign up for a second credit-bearing internship under extraordinary circumstances. In such cases, permission from your departmental faculty mentor or advisor plus the department chair is required.

### Enrollment guidelines

By the internship start date, you must be enrolled in the appropriate internship course for the appropriate number of credits awarded for the internship. For registration purposes, BA students should use ASTD 4910, MA students should use ASTD 5910, and PhD and MA-to-PhD students should use ASTD 6910. Except in highly unusual situations, the department only offers internships earning three credits and lasting for a single semester or 12-week summer session.

Your internship's start and end dates should conform as closely as possible to the timespan of a SLU academic semester—whether the 15-week fall and spring

semesters or the 12-week summer session. You may not conduct an internship during one timespan while taking the corresponding course credits during another timespan (e.g., a summer internship with associated course credits taken during the fall), except if you're continuing internship work to clear a grade of Incomplete from a previous semester's internship course.

### **Conditions specific to summer internships**

If you seek to enroll in an internship during the 12-week summer session, your faculty supervision may be performed by an American Studies instructor other than the regular faculty internship supervisor.

Undergraduates should be aware that summer internships are generally not covered by their regular tuition payments. The summer internship course usually must be paid for on a per-credit basis.

Graduate students holding assistantships who plan to take a summer internship for credit usually may move three of their allotted tuition-credit waivers from the fall or spring semester to the preceding summer to cover internship tuition. (Such waivers may only be shifted to the *preceding* summer, not to a subsequent one.) This move requires paperwork that must be completed in advance; see the American Studies graduate coordinator for details. This arrangement generally cannot be completed retroactively once the internship has commenced.

### **Requirement for on-site participation hours**

American Studies internships entail a minimum of 40 hours of on-site participation per credit earned, or 120 hours total for a three-credit internship. This works out to eight hours of on-site participation per week during the 15-week fall and spring semesters, or ten hours of on-site participation per week during the 12-week summer session.

With the faculty internship supervisor's consent, work performed for the host organization that is not conducted on-site can be counted toward these totals, though time spent producing the interim reports and final reflection paper will not be included. Also, the faculty internship supervisor can approve of an uneven distribution of internship hours across the semester—for instance, four hours some weeks and twelve hours other weeks—so long as the 120-hour total is met.

If a host organization is not able to provide you with 120 total hours of participation in its initiatives, you may be permitted to add extra research and writing projects that are relevant to the internship, such that the 120-hour minimum is reached. Such arrangements will only be made under exceptional circumstances and require written permission from the faculty internship supervisor.

## **Responsibilities of student and on-site facilitator**

Student's responsibilities:

- 1.) Know and adhere to all policies described and linked in this manual
- 2.) Complete projects and perform duties for the host organization as agreed in the internship contract
- 3.) Submit to the faculty internship supervisor three short interim reports, a concluding reflection paper, and a semester-end log of hours spent on the internship (see Section IV below for details)
- 4.) Ensure that the on-site facilitator completes the final evaluation and discusses it with you before submission

On-site facilitator's responsibilities:

- 1.) Provide student with information necessary for the College of Arts and Sciences internship contract and sign the completed form
- 2.) Provide at least 120 hours of internship work, consisting of meaningful task assignments related to the agreed-upon learning outcomes
- 3.) Meet with student frequently to discuss progress of the internship, and contact the faculty internship supervisor concerning any problems that arise
- 4.) Complete the final evaluation form by date specified in the internship contract, and discuss the completed evaluation with the student before submitting to the faculty internship supervisor

## **Relevant University and College policies**

While the internship course does not have a classroom-style syllabus, please be aware that the standard University and College policies on academic honesty, disabilities accommodation, and Title IX procedures are still in effect.

Applicable policies are linked below:

- Arts and Sciences academic honesty policy: <https://bit.ly/32VPkYx>
- University-wide policy on academic integrity: <https://bit.ly/34d1pZB>
- Provost's Office statement on academic integrity: <https://bit.ly/31ZLGvt>
- Disability accommodations policy: <https://bit.ly/36sUEVA>
- Title IX policy for Saint Louis University: <https://bit.ly/2Pwrvmf>

With regard to academic honesty, internship students should know that plagiarism in written submissions to the faculty internship supervisor, as well as falsification in reporting of internship hours and tasks completed, are grounds for a failing grade in the course and possible referral to administrators for further action.

### **Right to safe and appropriate internship environments**

The department is determined to ensure that its students conduct their internships in environments free from harassment, violence, sexual or other misconduct, demeaning or unprofessional treatment, discrimination, and unethical behavior. If you experience any of these or other inappropriate behaviors in your internship setting, please alert the department's faculty internship supervisor immediately and/or, where relevant, consult the list of campus and community resources provided by the University's Title IX coordinator at <https://bit.ly/33mguI6>.

Finally, internship students should know that all faculty members are "mandated reporters," meaning that faculty who learn of incidents involving Title IX matters must report them to SLU's Title IX coordinator without exception.

### 3.) Steps in Arranging an American Studies Internship

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Setting up an internship for academic credit in American Studies is usually fairly easy. However, you'll need to work closely with the department's faculty internship supervisor to ensure approval at each stage in the process. When setting up an internship, you should follow the sequence outlined below.

#### **Step 1: Schedule a conversation with the faculty internship supervisor**

Your starting point is an informal meeting—or, at the very least, an email exchange—with the department's faculty internship supervisor. You don't yet need to know what site you hope to work at or anything else about the internship you'll undertake. The faculty member will go over relevant policies and procedures with you, and they'll help you brainstorm about potential sites where you can best develop your particular skills and interests in a way that aligns with your American Studies coursework and your individually tailored path through your degree program.

If at all possible, you should initiate this conversation no later than four months ahead of the envisioned start date. The department will generally not accommodate an initial internship request coming less than six weeks before the intended start date, and internships will never be approved for a semester after the first day of classes has passed.

#### **Step 2: Begin reaching out to institutions that match your interests**

While the department can help you think through potential internship sites and can vouch for you with site employees as may be necessary, it's your job to reach out to institutions to see if they'd be willing to take on an intern. The department doesn't maintain a standing list of internship openings into which it can simply slot its students. However, SLU American Studies students have a strong track record in securing desirable and interesting internships, so you should approach this task with confidence rather than trepidation.

Make contact as early as you can, and have a list of backups in mind in case your first choice doesn't work out. In your introductory communication, explain how the institution's activities and mission align with your American Studies work and interests while sharing how you would hope to contribute to projects there. If you hear nothing back within about a week, try again, preferably using a

different communication medium (e.g., following up on an unanswered email by sending a letter or leaving a voicemail).

### **Step 3: Secure on-site facilitator's agreement and obtain projected task list**

Once your contact person (your future on-site internship facilitator) agrees in principle to have you work with their institution, obtain a list of tasks they envision having you perform over the semester.

Also, make sure they're able to provide at least 120 hours of on-site work during the span of the internship. This comes to approximately eight hours per week during the 15-week fall and spring semesters or ten hours per week during the 12-week summer session.

### **Step 4: Negotiate learning objectives with the faculty internship supervisor**

Using your task list and other information gleaned from the on-site facilitator who'll be directing your work, develop a rough draft of three to six learning goals and objectives for the internship. Simply put, these are brief statements of one or two lines each, detailing specific types of knowledge you aim to obtain and/or skills you expect to acquire through engaging in this specific internship.

These goals and objectives should clearly complement your studies and educational ambitions within your American Studies degree program. They should align with the general internship learning outcomes found on pages 2–3 above and, for undergraduate majors, should also align with Student Learning Outcome 5 found on page 3 above. Send your draft list to the faculty internship supervisor, who'll help you refine it before approving the list once it's satisfactory.

### **Step 5: Complete required paperwork**

Instructions for completing internship paperwork can be found below. The College of Arts and Sciences will not accept these forms later than the end of the semester's drop/add period.

#### ***A.) College of Arts and Sciences Internship Form***

To access this form, go to <https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/policies-procedures.php>, then scroll to the *Internship–Protocol* menu and download the file titled “Arts & Sciences Internship Learning Contract.”

In the “Duties” section, put the projected task list agreed with the on-site facilitator and approved by the faculty internship supervisor. In the “Educational Objectives” section, list the learning goals and objectives developed with the faculty internship supervisor.

In the “Method of Evaluation” section, list (on separate lines) the following four items:

- Three interim reports
- Final reflection paper of 8–10 pgs.
- Log of on-site hours
- On-site facilitator’s evaluation form

List the due dates for each, as arranged with the faculty internship supervisor. (The first entry will have three due dates since there are three interim reports due.)

Obtain the on-site facilitator’s signature on the “site supervisor” line. Either at this stage or beforehand, your host-organization contact person must also write to the faculty internship supervisor (email is preferred) to confirm that they understand and will fulfill the responsibilities for on-site facilitators listed on page 7 above.

### ***B.) SLU Waiver of Liability Form***

To access this form, go to <https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/policies-procedures.php>, then scroll to the *Internship–Protocol* menu and download the file titled “Internship Acknowledgment of Risk and Release for Elective Internships.” The form only requires the student’s signature (not that of the on-site facilitator).

## **Step 6: Convey completed paperwork to faculty supervisor for processing**

After you and your on-site facilitator have signed the completed College internship contract, convey this along with the signed SLU liability waiver to the faculty internship supervisor. If the paperwork has been filled out correctly, the faculty member will sign where necessary and send the materials to the College.

Following College approval, the paperwork will be routed to the Registrar's Office, which will manually enroll you in the internship course.

Congratulations!—you're now ready to begin work at your site.

## 4.) Student Assignments and Evaluation

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The faculty internship supervisor will evaluate your work in consultation with the on-site internship facilitator. This evaluation will be based on your completion of 120 hours of work (for a three-credit internship) on the host organization's initiatives, including tasks and projects assigned by the on-site facilitator, as well as on three interim reports and a final reflection paper you submit plus a concluding evaluation of your work by the on-site facilitator. After reviewing and assessing these materials, the faculty internship supervisor assigns you a grade using the standard SLU letter-grade scale.

Details of the assignments and evaluation components are below. All forms and student submissions will be retained by the faculty internship supervisor for department assessment purposes.

### Three interim reports

Interim progress reports are due one quarter, one half, and three quarters of the way through the semester, on dates specified in the internship paperwork. These three documents should be approximately 1.5 to 2 single-spaced pages. They are informal submissions, and either bullet points or full descriptive prose are equally acceptable. The reports should do the following:

- Recount the tasks performed and/or activities in which you've engaged during the previous quarter-semester
- Address with a moderate level of detail how those activities relate to the learning outcomes written into the original internship paperwork
- If relevant, describe skills or knowledge obtained that may not have shown up in the original learning outcomes
- Describe goals and expected projects for the remainder of the internship, including anticipated future activities to achieve learning outcomes that haven't yet been accomplished

These reports won't receive a letter grade. Instead, each will receive a *plus* (full credit) for thoughtful, complete, and on-time work that clearly describes the relationship between the work conducted and the agreed learning outcomes; a *minus* (half credit) for work that lacks sufficient thoughtfulness or appropriate

correlation with the agreed-upon learning outcomes are not being met; or a *zero* (no credit) for work that fails in substantial measure to cover the areas mentioned above.

The three interim reports are each worth 10 percent of the overall course grade (or 30 percent total). A late submission is penalized by one grade level (i.e., a plus becomes a minus or a minus becomes a zero) if submitted within three days of the due date; afterward, an unsubmitted report receives a zero.

### **Final reflection paper**

Your concluding writing assignment, due near the semester's end, is a reflection paper of 8–10 pages (double-spaced), written in standard prose rather than using bullet points. Seek here to expand on the academic and educational facets of the work undertaken while making connections to your academic studies and goals in American Studies. You may attach, as an appendix, representative samples of any work completed, such as catalogue records, bibliographies, grant applications, oral histories, exhibit materials, lesson plans, and so forth.

This reflection should include a description of work completed for the internship, the role you played within the host organization and its larger mission, and how your work fulfilled the internship's learning outcomes as set out in the internship paperwork at the semester's start. If you didn't have the opportunity to meet an anticipated learning outcome, explain why, and reflect on what can be learned from this mismatch between your initial expectations and the learning that took place. Likewise, if you obtained forms of knowledge or skills not specified in the start-of-semester learning outcomes, include a description of these in the paper.

If you are an undergraduate major, you should make sure that your paper reflects on the degree to which the internship achieved Student Learning Outcome 5 for the major, as found on page 3 above. This entails an analytical discussion of how you connected knowledge and skills from American Studies with the internship experience, how those connections illuminate questions of power, justice, and solidarity, and how the integration of American Studies knowledge with your internship experience was applied in service of others.

This final report will receive a standard letter grade and is worth 40 percent of the overall course grade. A late submission is penalized one full letter grade per day late if submitted within three days of the due date; afterward, an unsubmitted paper receives a zero.

## Log of hours

A log of hours that you spent participating in internship tasks and activities is due along with the final reflection paper. You may convey the information in whatever format strikes you as easiest and most clear. The log should show timespans and dates of your internship work for all days on which you put in eligible labor, and it should show the total hours expended for the semester.

Make sure to keep track of your hours as you go; it will be difficult accurately to assemble this information if you do it from scratch at the semester's end. At their discretion, the faculty internship supervisor may share this document with your on-site facilitator to confirm its accuracy.

This log doesn't in itself receive a grade. But if the log doesn't show a sufficient time expenditure to meet the course requirements (i.e., 120 hours for a three-credit internship), deductions proportional to the time deficit may be applied to the final grade.

## On-site facilitator's evaluation of student work

Near the semester's end, the on-site facilitator will complete a department form (see Appendix I below) evaluating your performance. They should discuss the document with you before they submit it. You'll be asked to sign this form to indicate that you've had a chance to discuss it with the on-site facilitator.

The faculty internship supervisor will assign a letter grade to this evaluation based on what it reveals about your participation, reliability, creative engagement, diligence, and quality of contribution to the host organization's initiatives. This evaluation component is worth 30 percent of the overall course grade.

## *Appendix I: On-Site Facilitator's Intern Evaluation Form*

An editable MS Word version of the two-page form shown below will be sent to the on-site facilitator, to be completed and returned at the internship's conclusion.

department of  
**American Studies**

### Intern Evaluation Form

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

BA students – ASTD 4910  
 MA students – ASTD 5910  
 PhD students – ASTD 6910

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Form to be filled out by on-site facilitator at the conclusion of the internship

**Intern's name:**

**Organization name:**

**On-site facilitator's name:**

**Semester (FL/SP/SU) and year:**

Thank you very much for overseeing this internship, and for participating in this evaluation process. A fair and accurate evaluation will assist the SLU American Studies internship supervisor in assigning a final grade, and it will benefit the student with critical feedback. Please evaluate the student along the following lines:

1. Attends work sessions regularly  
 Excellent\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_ Not Applicable \_\_\_
2. Interacts with colleagues in a professional manner  
 Excellent\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_ Not Applicable \_\_\_
3. Accomplishes directed tasks on a timely basis  
 Excellent\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_ Not Applicable \_\_\_
4. Conducts work in an organized and efficient fashion  
 Excellent\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_ Not Applicable \_\_\_
5. Demonstrates initiative and self-direction  
 Excellent\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_ Not Applicable \_\_\_

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## *Appendix II: List of Potential Local Host Institutions*

Students are encouraged to pursue innovative projects that support their goals and interests in American Studies. While internships may be arranged in locations other than St. Louis, a small sampling of possible St. Louis–area sites might include the following:

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