



American Culture

FROM STUDY TO SKILLS

All academic programs offered at the University of Michigan help students develop transferable skills. The Department of American Culture is a multidisciplinary LSA program that draws on History, Literature, Ethnic Studies, Material Culture, Music, Film, Women’s Studies, History of Art, Media and Communication Studies, and Sociology. The variety of academic fields at play allows AC majors to crisscross the disciplines, media, and time periods in order to carve out their own path. AC concentrators gain expertise at articulating connections

between historical events and struggles and the vast archive of texts, sights, and sounds that have made up the cultural landscape.

Students who major in American Culture gain vital training in critical thinking, writing, and argumentation. They develop advanced skills at analyzing and interpreting media, artworks, literature and other cultural representation. They arrive at understanding the richness of assorted ethnic and racial histories and experiences in American life.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Project Development Skills

- Designing/directing projects
- Organizing ideas/information
- Assessing needs/interest
- Evaluating
- Planning
- Translating theory into action
- Developing research ideas
- Organizing materials/information

Research/Analytical Skills

- Developing hypotheses
- Solving problems
- Using information resources
- Comparing interpretations

Interpersonal/

Cross-Cultural Skills

- Leading/participating in groups
- Comparing cultures/societies
- Developing sensitivity to/ understanding of differing viewpoints
- Working within organizations
- Coordinating committees

Communication Skills

- Writing clearly
- Making effective oral presentations
- Presenting viewpoints/ analyses
- Understanding/speaking to persons of different backgrounds
- Conveying ideas
- Listening to others

BUILDING YOUR SKILLS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Employers seek out individuals who can demonstrate excellent verbal and written communication skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills, initiative, and a strong work ethic. The Department of American Culture helps majors develop these skills and offers independent studies courses for semester projects outside the regular

classroom. Furthermore, student organizations, campus employment, research projects, and study abroad programs offer valuable opportunities to add to the skills you are developing in your classes. Summer internships, for example, can be an excellent way to test out a career field and develop marketable skills.

FROM SKILLS TO CAREER

Recent American Culture graduates have gone on to a variety of career paths. Some have pursued law school, supported by the academic rigor and analytical focus of AC coursework. Others have pursued social work, supported by AC courses in politics, social issues, and ethnic communities. Others have pursued museum work or advanced arts degrees, supported by coursework in the arts, material culture, and community organization.

Project Development Skills

Development officer
University academic administrator
Curator, museum or freelance 
Exhibit designer
Recording label director
Cultural events planner
Museum outreach coordinator
Urban planner 

Research/Analytical Skills

Librarian 
Physician 
Attorney 
Paralegal
Market researcher
Grants coordinator
Archivist

 = Further Study Required

For more career information, see O*Net at online.onetcenter.org

Others have pursued careers in media and entertainment fields, supported by AC coursework in popular culture and media culture. Others have gone on to medical school, supported by AC coursework in the sociology and history of health issues. Others still have gone to graduate work in such academic fields as History and African-American Studies. The list below is a sample of careers undertaken by American Culture majors.

Interpersonal/ Cross-Cultural Skills

Personnel director
Affirmative action officer
Union organizer
Community organizer
Minister/theologian 
Counselor/social worker 
Psychotherapist 
Learning specialist
Lobbyist
Spokesperson
Television programming director
Anthropologist 

Communication Skills

K-12 teacher
College professor 
Teach for America teacher/coordinator
Journalist/writer, all media
Editor, all media
Politician
Public Relations specialist
Spokesperson

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

All American Culture students have an opportunity to tailor the major (min. 28 credits) based on their own intellectual & career interests. Students will take AMCULT 275 "Practices of American Culture"; AMCULT 498 "Senior Capstone Seminar"; a set of flexible breadth requirements & a combination of open electives based their particular goals. We currently offer minors in Arab & Muslim American Studies, Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies, Digital Studies, Latina/o Studies and Native American Studies.

NEXT STEPS/RESOURCES

To begin connecting to professionals in fields that interest you, create your own LinkedIn account:

careercenter.umich.edu/article/getting-started-linkedin

To identify internships or job opportunities, visit Career Center Connector: careercenter.umich.edu/article/c3

On campus jobs (work-study and non work-study jobs) are listed at: studentemployment.umich.edu/JobX_Home.aspx

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For more specific information, visit the *LSA Bulletin* or the AC website.

Department of American Culture

3700 Haven Hall
734-763-1460
lsa.umich.edu/ac

Newnan Advising Center

1255 Angell Hall
734-764-0332
lsa.umich.edu/advising

The Maize Pages list hundreds of organizations for students to get involved in:

maizepages.umich.edu

Connect to Community lists volunteer opportunities in local organizations: connect2community.umich.edu

The Career Center

3200 Student Activities Building
734-764-7460
careercenter.umich.edu
facebook.com/careercenter.umich
twitter.com/careercenter
linkedin.com/company/the-career-center-at-the-university-of-michigan