

MA in American Studies

2023/2024

Information for Candidates



UNIVERSITY
OF WARSAW



American
Studies
Center



ABOUT US

Welcome to the ASC!

The American Studies Center of the University of Warsaw is the second largest American Studies department in Europe, offering a vigorous American Studies program, which reflects the breadth and dynamism of the field. In teaching, we combine more traditional perspectives with cutting-edge topics.

Thoroughly interdisciplinary, the program builds on classical American Studies — **U.S. American government and politics, U.S. foreign policy, U.S. history and society, American literature and intellectual history**. But ASC's program is unique among such programs in Poland in that it also includes approaches critically engaging the discipline, incorporating **ethnic and indigenous studies, critical race theory and Black studies, gender and queer studies, disability studies, and environmental studies**.

We are one of the few non-language teaching institutes at the University of Warsaw where **all courses are taught in English**. While at the BA level our program focuses on the U.S. American Studies, our MA program offers a wider **Western Hemispheric perspective** and, even more crucially, **a highly individualized, research-oriented** curriculum allowing students to develop **graduate and research skills**. We are also proud to have brilliant and passionate students whose enthusiasm drives **numerous initiatives within our rich institutional culture**, which includes numerous guest lectures and workshops.

The American Studies Center is **strongly internationalized**. Several of our permanent faculty are scholars from the U.S. and Mexico; every semester we host **visiting professors** from the U.S. and European countries, under the Fulbright Distinguished Scholar Program and bilateral exchange agreements with other universities. Our faculty are greatly invested in research in the U.S. and regularly publish in high-ranking foreign journals and publishing houses.

The ASC Library

The ASC Library, with almost thirty thousand volumes, is the **largest American Studies library in Central Europe**.

We provide free and **open access** to our growing library collection, following the example of Western universities. At the ASC library, you do not need to wade through online catalogs and order books in advance. You can just stop by in between your classes and easily access the entire collection. Our staff is always there to help you find what you're looking for. With books organized into thematic categories, you can quickly find similar titles on the topic you are interested in, build your bibliography and really dig into your research. Or just find a good read for an evening.

REF 200
Religion

6
13

Social Sciences

REF 320
Political Science

REF 330
Economics

THE ASC IN NUMBERS



1976

the Center is founded



15

Erasmus+ destinations



2018

our current
MA program starts



26

PAAS MA Thesis
Awards since 2010



28 294

volumes in our Library



2nd largest
American Studies
institution in Europe



56

full-time and affiliated
international faculty



274

MA students since 2018

MA IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Our MA program

Our MA program integrates the structure of American graduate programs with the uniqueness of European views of the United States. In many countries, American Studies has been traditionally rooted in literary studies and history. We naturally offer courses in these, but our faculty represent a full spectrum of U.S.-related interests and disciplines. **From film and television to political science, from economics to gender and sexuality studies, from social science to popular culture — we have it all and more.** In many cases, our focus on the United States also leads beyond that country. As a cultural studies department, we prepare our students for advanced thinking about any place. And any time. And any people. With that in mind, we provide you not only with a degree but also with **skills and resources to better navigate the complexities of today's world.**

Why study with us?

Our program is centrally research-oriented, shaping in our students critical thinking and **appetite for challenging questions** that do not come with easy answers. These competencies certainly prepare our graduates for doctoral programs, but they are hardly unique to academia and figure equally essentially in creative industries, journalism, advertising and marketing, think-tanks and NGOs, art and culture management, and many others. Central to our training is the exclusive use of English in all aspects of academic work, as is an emphasis we put on **transforming research into writing**. Yes, you write a lot with us, but we will teach you how to hone your thinking and put it to (increasingly metaphorical) paper.



Did you know that with so many writing classes at the ASC, you have **ready projects to submit** for academic conferences, papers to publish in academic journals or research topics to explore further in your MA thesis?

MA IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Our teaching approach

The practical aspect of our program's modeling after the American graduate school is that most courses are choice-based. Instead of long lectures in stuffy lecture halls, we offer **small group sessions**, perfect for seminars and class discussions. We treat students as contributors, not just recipients, and we focus more on **student participation** and individual growth. We give you the opportunity to present your ideas in the culture of mentoring and extracurricular education during the classes as well as outside of it, during conferences and projects you want to partake in.

Our classes

Apart from a few mandatory classes during the first year, students choose a range of research-intensive proseminars through which they can develop their interests. Our flagship course, **research proseminar**, enables students to gain research skills, such as working with sources, reviewing academic literature, interpreting data, and writing well-rounded academic papers. Some of our research proseminars offered in previous years include: "Social Movements and Social Change in Contemporary America," "Introduction to Comics Studies," "American Political Parties: Continuity and Change," "Contemporary American Cinema," "The Unruly Bodies of American Film and Fiction," "U.S. Cultural Nationalism," "New York and Chicago: The Cities and Their People."



Our offer changes each year!
See **our website** for the most current coursework offer.



Did you know that if you need extra help with your written assignments, you can visit our **Writing Lab**? We will provide you with feedback on your written work and guide you through the revision process before you turn in your paper to be graded.

MEET THE FACULTY



Paweł Frelik

My principal research interests include (audio)visual culture (that's, like, a lot of stuff), video games (this means I'm doing research when I'm playing), and speculative narratives (this is what I say when I don't want to scare people with "science fiction"). Inevitably, these areas are reflected in my teaching. Every year I offer at least one research proseminar built around these topics. I also teach the course titled "Texts in U.S. Culture," in which we look at famous images — photographs, paintings, movie frames — and use them as launchpads for discussions about contemporary American life and culture. Last but not least, I often lead MA seminars whose mandate — American Audiovisual Culture and Media — allows students to write their theses on everything from film and television to music videos to video games. Yup, this means you can get your master's for writing about *Nomadland*, *Twin Peaks*, Janelle Monáe, and *Grand Theft Auto V* (you need to write smart things, though).

MEET THE FACULTY



Agnieszka Graff

I plan my MA courses around themes where culture and politics intersect in fascinating ways. One such theme is the U.S. Culture Wars. We discuss — and often disagree about! — the underlying causes of polarization. Are they economic, religious, cultural, or psychological? The second big theme in my teaching has been race and gender in U.S. movies. Here we focus on specific films (from the 1900s till today) famous for their racism or anti-racism, or their treatment of gender and sexuality. Students then pick their own movie to explore and some have produced exciting papers on the topics of their choice. My courses are always exploratory — I come with questions which I am thinking about myself. We share ideas and texts; we cherish our disagreements and discoveries; we read and comment on each other's work. My students receive guidance and a lot of freedom in developing their own topics, as well as encouragement to collaborate with each other — that is both challenging and exciting.

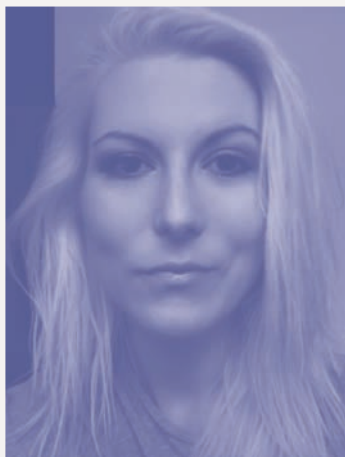
MEET THE FACULTY



Marcin Gajek

In the MA program I teach a research proseminar “Dynamic of American Political Parties: Continuity and Change.” Under my supervision, students trace the evolution of the American party system, discuss in detail how parties contest elections, and explain what parts of American society support which party (and for what reasons). We usually also analyze the results of the most recent federal elections. The other course I teach is “Texts in U.S. Culture: Readings in American Political Tradition,” in which we focus on reading and analyzing primary sources. In my classes, I frequently divide students into smaller groups of 2-4 people and ask them to work together on the assigned tasks. I also like to use a series of short written assignments instead of a final exam. My goal is to make students reflect on different issues and understand them better. Instead of asking to memorize facts, names or dates, I give them plenty of opportunities to express their views and opinions on discussed issues.

MEET THE FACULTY



Alicja Fijałkowska-Myszyńska

My courses at the ASC can be characterized in three words: Hemispheric, interdisciplinary, and research-oriented. They offer a unique vision of the Americas from Canada to Tierra del Fuego seen as one, giving at the same time research experience necessary to prepare the student for doctoral school. But most of all, my courses develop passion, taking the students on a journey through 35 countries, each with amazing culture, traditions, unique history and identity that together form the great family of the Americas. The classes I teach, such as “Cultural Diversity of the Western Hemisphere,” “Mass Media in the Americas,” and “History of International Relations in the Western Hemisphere,” give my students tools and show the way so they can discover their own Americas, every day from a new and every time more interesting perspective.

TRAVEL AND STUDENT EXCHANGES

Study abroad

Our Center has Erasmus+ agreements with numerous universities in Europe. You can spend up to two semesters studying in Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Turkey, France, Bulgaria, or Greece.

Is Europe too close for you?

Apply for short-term exchange studies at foreign universities outside Europe within bilateral agreements. Among these you'll find McGill University in Canada, Northeastern Illinois University in the U.S., Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara in Mexico, and many more.

Go to the US!

Thanks to a special bilateral agreement between the ASC and University of Florida, Gainesville, MA students can apply for stipends for a semester-long-stay at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.



An exchange semester is a priceless, unforgettable experience. Perhaps the most valuable part of my exchange were the people I met, but also the chance this experience gave me to explore my limits and understand myself better.

Gyuzel, an exchange student at TU Dresden, Germany, 2021/2022



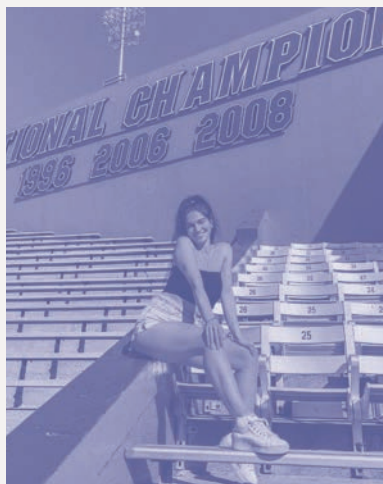
Our mobility coordinator, **Ludmila Janion**, will be happy to help you find a perfect destination and suitable courses, and to collect the required documents.

TRAVEL AND STUDENT EXCHANGES



Studying in Montreal during my semester abroad was truly an exhilarating experience, in terms of both academic and personal growth. Having the opportunity to be surrounded by such inspiring educators and fellow peers made me realize that everything is possible.

Ewa, an exchange student at McGill University, Canada, 2022/2023



I particularly liked the course on Transnational Feminism which placed women and feminism in a transnational perspective, focusing on various theories and movements engendered by women in contemporary national contexts. I was taught by incredibly strong and inspiring women at the ASC, and the UF was not an exception.

Roksolana, an exchange student at the University of Florida, United States, 2021/2022

TRAVEL AND STUDENT EXCHANGES

The Transatlantic Symposium

It is a short-term academic exchange between the Oregon State University, Humboldt-University Berlin and the American Studies Center, during which the participants discuss topics of contemporary relevance in an interdisciplinary, experiential and transatlantic setting.

Each Symposium encompasses a student conference and a tour. At the conference, students give presentations on the topic of that year's Symposium, while the tour includes meetings with representatives of national agencies, local government officials, and non-governmental organizations, as well as museum visits and other activities. The Symposium locations alternate between the United States and Europe. Since 2012, the ASC students have visited Berlin, New York, Vienna, Rome, and Southern California.



The entire symposium and the seminars preceding it were productive and stimulating, full of fruitful discussions and memorable experiences. Thanks to the live-in part and the student exchange, we had a great chance not only to sightsee Berlin and Warsaw but also to expand our international network, make new friends, and grow through discussions, special lectures, readings and individual research conducted for our presentations.

Tomasz, a participant of the 20th Transatlantic Students Symposium "Freedom and the Transatlantic Relationship in a Multi-Crisis World," Berlin and Warsaw, 2022

MEET THE ALUMNI

After your studies

The focus on culture and society enhances our alumni's **cultural competency, communication skills, and critical thinking**, setting them up for success in business ventures, nongovernmental organizations, cultural institutions, government agencies, research and educational institutions, museums, political action groups, social service agencies, youth-development institutions. By fostering curiosity about the world and elevating students' English skills, our studies also develop core competencies needed in fields such as film industry, journalism, arts, tourism, and much more.

Meet our alumni!



Aleksandra Jehn-Olszewska

teacher assistant at the American School of Warsaw



MA graduate of 2021

If I was to describe studying at the ASC in one phrase, I would say it was **eye-opening**. After these studies, you will never look in the same way at films, books, popular culture, news, art, or people around you. In my opinion, a skill practiced the most thoroughly at the ASC is critical thinking. I find it to be a crucial skill not only for studying but also for living in the times of the information overflow. At the ASC I learned how to notice, understand, and analyze through confrontation, creative comparison, acknowledging perspectives, and drawing attention to overlooked details. **I feel that studying at the ASC was a crucial part of the process of my formation as a person** and it inspired my professional and lifestyle choices.

MEET THE ALUMNI



Ibrahim Mertcan Alcinkaya

Founder of an Online Language School,
English Teacher, and PhD Candidate
at the University of Warsaw



MA graduate of 2020

Studying at the American Studies Center has been nothing less than **rewarding, fascinating, and fun**. As a fresher, you get to discover numerous aspects of the U.S. taught to you by experts who are always eager to guide you. Besides the academic part, I was delighted to have met such **amazing people** — kind, sincere, and true friends — which, to me, sums up the Center's social environment perfectly. I came to the ASC as an Erasmus student and my decision to stay in Poland came as early as the first day of my Erasmus experience. At present, I am a year away from defending my PhD dissertation, and looking forward to moving forward after that.



Aleksandra Rabenda-Nowak

PhD candidate at Vistula University
and Corporate Services officer
at British Embassy Warsaw



MA graduate of 2019

There were many things I liked and appreciated about our Center, but I think the most significant one was that the ASC was (and still is) **a space for open discussion and dialogue**, where one can learn to understand and respect other people's opinion. I have wanted to study American Studies since I was in secondary school. Many people tried to discourage me from applying for the ASC, as a result of the stereotype that cultural studies will not give you any "useful" profession. I argue this is a total misconception about cultural studies. **The ASC is the place where you can better understand what you want to do in the future.**

MEET THE ALUMNI



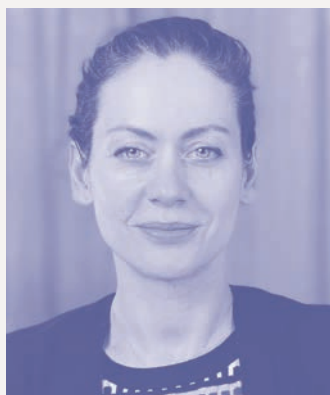
Małgorzata Zacheja

International Programs Coordinator at the European Academy of Diplomacy



MA graduate of 2018

The ASC has been a place where I regained my **excitement towards learning**, as I was encouraged to explore more of what I liked and do the absolute minimum of what I didn't. I was pushed out of my comfort zone and learned how to grab people's attention solely through what I had to say. I've been taught to think critically and distinguish truth from fake news. **I interned at the U.S. Embassy in Poland** where I had the chance to meet Barack Obama, John Kerry and Madeleine Albright. It all shaped my passions and my path. Currently, I coordinate the Anti-Disinformation project at the European Academy of Diplomacy, and I am planning to continue my career in diplomacy.



Karolina Zbytniewska

Editor-in-Chief at EURACTIV.pl,
EUROPE's MEDIALAB Board Member,
University of Warsaw Lecturer



MA graduate of 2009

I studied American Studies, European Studies, Philosophy, and English Linguistics in Poland, Germany, and the UK. The ASC was (along with American Studies at Free Berlin University) **the best academic experience I have had**. Even today I always recommend the ASC to young people who do not know what to study. I always say: "ASC is the best," and I really think so. And why? Because in sharp contrast to many Polish academic institutions, the ASC is not a fossil stuck in the past. It's a **modern, well-organized faculty**, where lecturers are engaged in what they teach and in teaching itself.

RECRUITMENT 2023

Admissions to the MA program

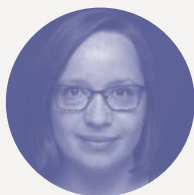
There are two stages of the admissions process: submission of a short Research Interest Statement and participation in an oral exam based on this Statement.

The purpose of the admissions process is to select **candidates who would benefit from our research-oriented program** and have some ideas about what they would like to research over the course of their studies. You do not need to have a ready-made research project that you intend to write an MA on; you are free to pick a different MA topic if you find something in our program that inspires you later on. What we need to know at the stage of the admission is that you are interested in a particular topic in American studies, you are aware of what other academics have to say about this topic, and you can formulate promising research questions.

The Statement should be 300–400 words long and include a list of 3–5 academic sources you have read. If you include all of these elements in your **Research Interest Statement** and receive at least 25 out of 50 points for the first stage of the admissions process, we will invite you to take part in the **oral exam**. This is a conversation between you and the committee that will take place online and focus on the topic you discuss in your Research Interest Statement. During the exam, we will talk about the topic you've identified and the initial research you've done, including the academic sources you enumerated. The committee will be looking for someone who can formulate arguments, who is aware of the basic concepts related to the topic of their interest, and generally someone who seems to be a good fit for our **research-based interdisciplinary American studies program**. In this stage of the process you can also get 50 points maximum. Overall, the candidates with the highest scores out of a 100 will be admitted.



For **more detailed information**, please consult the Internet Recruitment of Candidates (IRK) system.



If you have any questions about the admission requirements for this program, please get in touch with the Head of the Admissions Committee, **Anna Kurowicka** at rekrutacja.osa@uw.edu.pl.



Did you know that our Center is 47 years old this year? Established in 1976 as a **research institute**, the Center first opened its MA program in 1992.



STUDENT LIFE

ASC Students' Union

The ASC Students' Union organizes many fantastic events, such as Thanksgiving Dinner, ASC Picnic, Super Bowl Watch Party and Oscars' Movie Night, giving our students the opportunity to integrate, support their grassroots initiatives and learn more about American culture. You can also throw your cap at the annual graduation ceremony!

I learned a lot as a president of the Students' Union in terms of self-confidence, working with people, organizing events, administrative jobs, and liaising with authorities and sponsors. I still use skills and experience I gained at the ASC in my professional career today.

Aleksandra, a president of the ASC Student's Union in the years 2018–2019

Joining a student organization can be a life-changing experience! Follow the ASC Students' Union on social media:



@zss.osa



@zss.osa

SPECIAL EVENTS

At the ASC, we introduce our students to the wider academic world of American studies by organizing numerous special events, lectures and workshops.

Our guests join us from foreign academic institutions, diplomatic missions, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations to share their knowledge and passion related to American history, politics, and culture. Our **American Studies Colloquium Series**, now in its 13th year, brings together scholars from different national contexts who address a wide array of topics ranging from cultural readings of poetry, through environmental history, to basketball, offering our students the possibility to explore their interests outside of the regular classes.

The ASC houses several research groups, led by senior professors and drawing many graduate students and PhD candidates. Each has a specific line of research—Weird Fictions, Leadership, and Gender/Sexuality. Members of the latter have started their very own **podcast “Oswoic gender”** on topics related to gender and sexuality research. Each group organizes its own series of events, often open to the public. Our Center also nurtures student research through organizing conferences, such as **The Senses of Science Fiction: Visions, Sounds, Spaces** (2019) and **Gender/Sexuality Conference** (2022), most recently.

Thursday, March 8, 2023
Elizabeth Dunn (Indiana University Bloomington)
"Violent Dismissal: Family Separation, Industrial Accidents and other Disruptions among Refugee Workers in the American Food System"

Tuesday, March 28, 2023 2000M AT 10:00 AM
David Shanks (Monash University)
"The Fabled Girl from Pheasant: The Beauty and the Influence of American Culture"

Thursday, April 27, 2023
Judith Roemer (University of Cologne)
"Beyond Nature Poetry: Environmental Imaginaries of Mobility in Contemporary American Poetry"

Thursday, May 18, 2023
Henry Messenger (Dartmouth College)
"Understanding Appalachian Otherness"

Thursday, May 25, 2023
Evelina Wink (University of Warsaw)
"English Language Was and the Genderability Problem in the Face of Global Linguistic Diversity"

Thursday, June 1, 2023
Karin Holsberg (Dagstuhl State University)
"Revolutionary: Contemporary Perspective"

Except for one online session, all talks are held in person, on Thursdays, at 4:45 p.m., at Oboza 35, room 2.118

For details and links, check out:
www.asc.osu.edu/pl/colloquium
[facebook.com/asc.osu](https://www.facebook.com/asc.osu)

UNIVERSITY OF SILESONIA
OSWÓC GENDER
RESEARCH GROUP



PRACOWNIA
**GENDER
SEXUALITY**
RESEARCH GROUP

OSWOIĆ GENDER

Naukowy aktywizm, innowacyjne badania i feministyczna dydaktyka

Anna Plekutowską w rozmowie z członkiniami Pracowni Gender/Sexuality

Karolina Krasuska
Ludmila Janion
Aleksandra Kamińska
Agnieszka Kotwosińska

Anna Kurowiczka
Natalia Pamula
Marta Usiekiewicz

Współorganizację na www.asc.osu.edu/pl oraz na naszym profilu na Facebooku: American Studies Center - OŚA UW

UNIVERSYTET SILEZSKI
OSWÓC GENDER
RESEARCH GROUP

THE DAY OF THE HYBRIDS

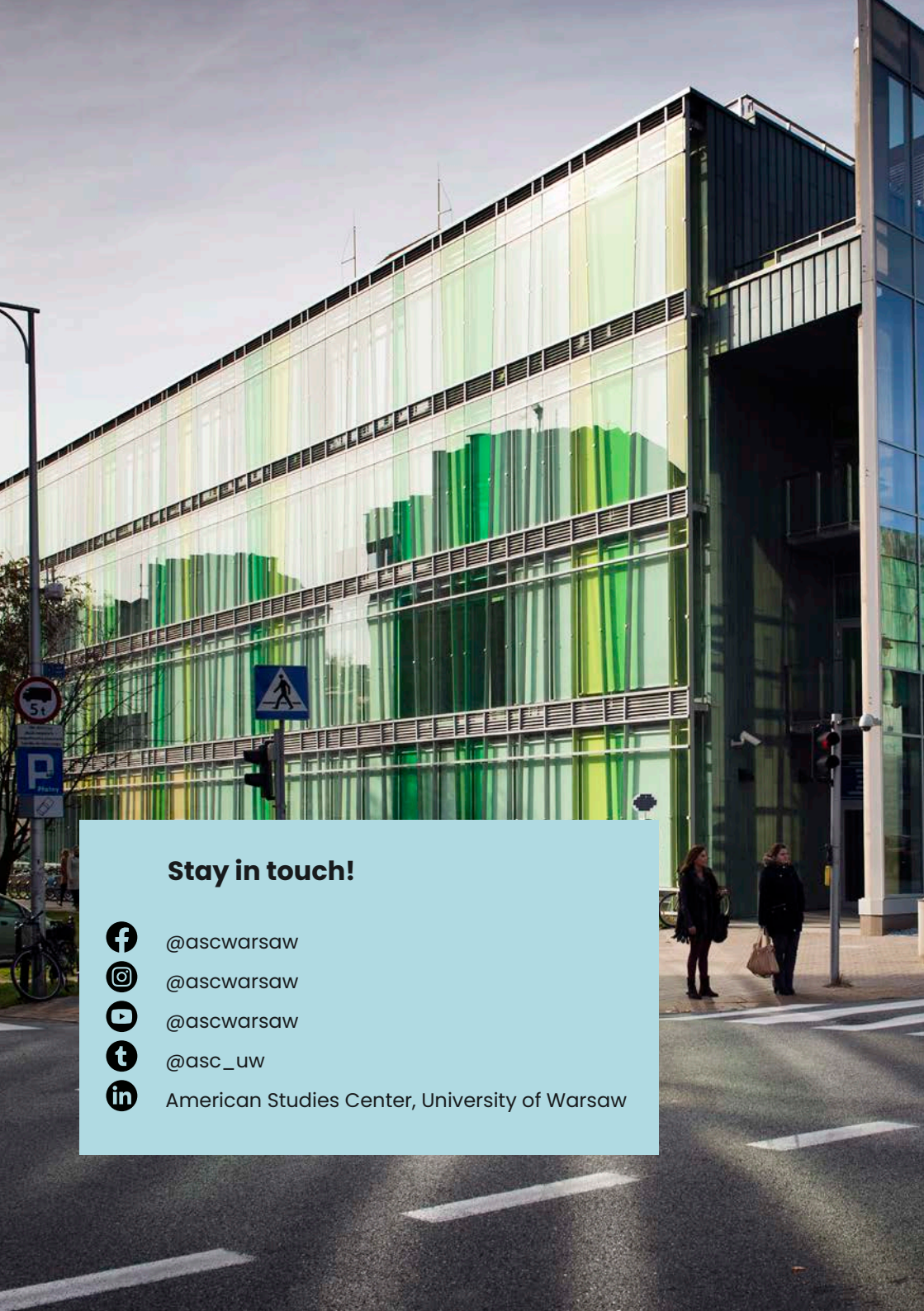
JUNE 5, 2023

WEIRD FICCTIONS
RESEARCH GROUP

AMERICAN STUDIES

[@weirdfictions](https://www.facebook.com/weirdfictions)
davofthehybrids@gmail.com





Stay in touch!



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@asc_uw



American Studies Center, University of Warsaw



CONTACT

Our location

The ASC is located in a modern and accessible building, located **in the very center of Warsaw**, in close proximity to major traffic arteries, the main campus, the University of Warsaw Library (BUW), numerous cafes and restaurants, the Vistula Boulevard and the historic city center.

Visit us:

ul. Dobra 55
00-312 Warszawa

Contact us:

+48 22 55 333 21
asc@uw.edu.pl
www.asc.uw.edu.pl

Scholarships and Financial and Social Aid

Every year several ASC students are awarded the Rector's Scholarship for high GPA, significant scientific or artistic achievements, or achievements in sport. Warsaw University offers a wide array of social services to aid students financially. These include awards, stipends, one-time financial assistance, health insurance, **university accommodation**. We sponsor students' best research projects by awarding them research grants. Students who need assistance due to disabilities or chronic illnesses are supported by the Office for Persons with Disabilities (BON).

PHOTO CREDITS:

Mikołaj Starzyński (p. 19)

Uniwersytet Warszawski / Biuro Promocji / M. Kaźmierczak (p. 19, 24)

Marcin Runowski (s. 2, 27).

Private archive

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Joanna Bębenek



#americanlycritically

**See you
in October!**

www.asc.uw.edu.pl