

MA in American Studies

2025/2026

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 with high-ranking journals and presses.

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. 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.

THE ASC IN NUMBERS



1976

the Center is founded



17

Erasmus+ destinations



26 728

volumes in our Library



26

PAAS MA Thesis Awards since 2010



64

full-time and affiliated international faculty



2nd largest American Studies institution in Europe

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 OUR FACULTY

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).

– Paweł Frelik



MEET OUR FACULTY

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.

– Agnieszka Graff



MEET OUR FACULTY

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.

– Marcin Gajek



MEET OUR FACULTY

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.

– Alicja
Fijałkowska-
Myszyńska



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 **Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Turkey, France, Bulgaria, Czechia, and 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.**



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



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

TRAVEL AND STUDENT EXCHANGES



I would describe my experience in Berlin as unquestionably rich academically. If you like theory and a lot of reading, I think it's for you. It also helps to get into the routine of gradually working on your literature review, if you are currently writing your thesis. The American Studies library has a lot of good sources, and is a nice place to study. I should also mention Mensa (student canteen) which is very convenient, and on campus. What I found very exciting was that Freie University organizes very interesting guided tours of the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, or the boat tour on the Spree River.

Klara, exchange student at the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, 2024/2025



During my student exchange at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) I was able to join classes, discussions, and community events where I made friendships for life. Chicago's rich cultural and historical landscape proved to be the best environment for a student exchange, from exploring world class museums and diverse neighborhoods to attending the Cubs game, and trying the famous deep-dish pizza. Chicago's energy made every day an adventure—whether it was navigating the L train or finally accepting that no matter how confident you are, nothing prepares you for Chicago's winter wind.

Julia, exchange student at the Northeastern Illinois University, United States, 2024

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 seminar preceding our trip to New York City allowed me to engage with texts by key cultural studies scholars and further develop my in-progress master's thesis, portions of which I later presented at the student conference concluding the program. The trip itself offered a unique opportunity to experience American culture firsthand and visit iconic landmarks such as the Brooklyn Bridge, Central Park, and the Museum of Modern Art. I believe the Transatlantic Symposium played a pivotal role in my academic growth and provided invaluable opportunities to network with peers from international institutions.

Aleksandra, a participant of the 21st Transatlantic Students Symposium "Transatlantic Space(s): Interstitial Ties between Utopia and Reality" New York, 2023.

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

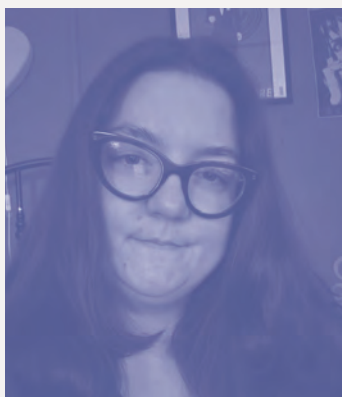


Ibrahim Mertcan Alcinkaya

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.



Olga Gajek

PhD Candidate at the University of Warsaw

 MA graduate of 2022


The American Studies Center is the place where I could truly develop my passion into an actual research topic. The Professors here are genuinely engaged in your academic endeavors and want to help you grow. I've been able to pursue my **niche interests** with the best support from **top-tier scholars** in the field. The ASC has so many student-centered research groups, such as Gender/Sexuality Research Group Student Chapter, and Weird Fictions Research Group — both offer fantastic resources and opportunities.

MEET THE ALUMNI



Julia Płaczekiewicz

English tutor and PhD Candidate at the University of Warsaw

 MA graduate of 2020

Studying at the American Studies Center was a **truly wonderful and enriching experience**. The wide variety of courses allowed me to explore and develop my interests in American culture while broadening my academic horizons. Above all, the ASC is a welcoming community that encourages critical thinking, diverse perspectives, and open discussions, making learning both engaging and enjoyable. It was an amazing journey through and through!



RECRUITMENT 2025

Admissions to the MA program

There are two stages of the admissions process:

(1) submission of a research statement and
(2) oral exam in which candidates are asked questions related to the submitted statement. The purpose of the admissions process is to select candidates who will benefit from our research-oriented program.

In your research statement (300–400 words), describe your research plans in the field of American Studies. Remember to write in English and answer the following questions:

- What area(s) of research in American Studies would you like to explore and why? Be specific, for instance, “protest culture in the United States,” “American war literature,” “race and ethnicity in American film”;
- Have you already done research in this area? If so, what research problems have you addressed? What sources have you used (name between 3–5)?
- How will your future research build on your previous knowledge?
- What are some of the research questions you plan to address? Please remember that the questions should be clearly stated and focused.
- What is the significance of your research? In other words, why is it worth pursuing?

The research statement will be evaluated based on your ability to articulate ideas/research interests in written English, your ability to identify relevant and interesting research problems, and the relevance of your research interests to the American Studies curriculum. It does not commit you to a particular topic as your future MA project at the ASC. You may modify or change it as you develop your knowledge and skills.

RECRUITMENT 2025

If you include all of these elements in your research statement and receive at least 25 out of 50 points, we will invite you to take part in the oral exam. This exam between you and the committee will take place online and will focus on the topic discussed in your research statement. During the exam, we will discuss the topic you have identified and the initial research you have done, including the academic sources you have listed. The committee will be looking for someone who can formulate arguments, who is aware of the basic concepts related to their topic of interest, and who seems to be a good fit for our research-based interdisciplinary American Studies program. You may also receive a maximum of 50 points at this stage. Overall, the candidates with the highest scores out of 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, **Joanna Mąkowska** at rekrutacja.osa@uw.edu.pl.



Did you know that our Center will celebrate its **50th birthday** next year? Established in 1976 as a research institute, the Center first opened its MA program in 1992.



STUDENT LIFE

ASC Students' Union

Joining the Students' Union provides a platform for students to actively participate in shaping campus life and voicing their opinions on various issues affecting the student community. We launch our most iconic events such as Oscars Nights, Thanksgiving, ASC picnic and many more activities and initiatives aimed at enriching student life. Most of all, it gives us a unique opportunity to make lifelong friends.

Joining ASC's Students' Union is one of the best decisions you can make during the course of your studies. The Student's Union organizes many of ASC's iconic events, such as the Oscars' Night or Super Bowl Watch Party, but we also help our students on a day-to-day basis. It's a commitment, a really big one, to be honest, but also one that makes our community much, much better – because of your involvement!

Kuba, Students' Union Vice-President 2023–2024

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 15th 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 “Oswoić 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), **Gender/Sexuality Conference** (2022), and **Status Quo/Status Queer** (2024) **Forgotten, Misplaced, Marginalized: Speculations We Don't See** (2025).

Would you like to get involved?

Student **Chapter of the Gender/Sexuality Research Group**, founded in 2023, is an initiative by and for students who want to expand their knowledge about feminist, queer, and gender theory outside of the classroom setting. The Chapter offers a platform for MA students to exchange ideas, prepare for public speaking in an academic environment, and present their research. In the last 2 years, SC organized and facilitated many student-led workshops and lectures, also with invited guests like Sara Ahmed and Sarah Schulman!





Stay in touch!



@ascwarsaw



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@ascwarsaw



American Studies Center, University of Warsaw

CONTACT

Our location

The ASC is located in a modern and accessible building, **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).

The ASC Prospectus 2025

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#americanlycritically

**See you
in October!**

www.asc.uw.edu.pl

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