

Course Information Document: Undergraduate

For students starting in Academic Year 2017/2018

1. Course Summary

Names of programme(s) and award title(s)	BA (Hons) American Studies BA (Hons) American Studies with International Year (see Annex A for details)
Award type	Single Honours
Mode of study	Full time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 6
Duration	3 years 4 years with the International Year
Location of study	Keele University – main campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	Not applicable
Regulator	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
Tuition Fees	UK/EU students: Fee for 2017/18 is £9,250* International students: Fee for 2017/18 is £13,000** The fee for the international year abroad is calculated at 15% of the standard year fee
Additional Costs	Refer to section 16

How this information might change: Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

2. What is a Single Honours programme?

The Single Honours programme described in this document allows you to focus more or less exclusively on American Studies. In keeping with Keele's commitment to breadth in the curriculum, the programme also gives you the opportunity to take some modules outside American Studies, in other disciplines and in modern foreign languages as part of a 360-credit Honours degree. Thus it enables you to gain, and be able to demonstrate, a distinctive range of graduate attributes.

** These fees are regulated by Government. We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study in response to changes in government policy and/or changes to the law. If permitted by such change in policy or law, we may increase your fees by an inflationary amount or such other measure as required by government policy or the law. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>*

*** We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>*

3. Overview of the Programme

American Studies explores the nature, development and rich diversity of the United States from a range of perspectives. Keele pursues this goal by bringing together several disciplines – history, literature, film, politics, geography. You will be encouraged to develop your own disciplinary interests; equally, you will develop multi- and inter-disciplinary perspectives on America. One important element of the course is the opportunity to exchange with a partner university in North America, thereby permitting you to experience a different academic and social environment while simultaneously pursuing your Keele degree.

Beginning in the 1960s, Keele was a pioneer in the development of American Studies in Britain. Principally located in the School of Humanities, but drawing contributions from other schools, notably the School of Politics, Philosophy, International Relations and Environment (SPIRE). The Programme is delivered by a group of research-active teachers, among whom are some of the leading practitioners in their respective disciplines.

4. Aims of the Programme

The broad aims of the programme are to enable you to:

- Experience a flexible, high quality, intellectually stimulating modular programme within which you will improve your knowledge and understanding of US society and culture.
- Develop your international awareness and experience to enable you to play an active, thoughtful and inquiring role in society.
- Promote the use and development of a wide range of transferable skills, such as effective collation, interpretation and comparison of information from a broad range of sources using different analytical methods. These skills are not only central to progress in American Studies but also vital in helping you meet professional employment needs.
- Encourage you to develop your full potential by providing you with the ability to acquire and develop skills at each level of the programme that enable you to fulfil the more challenging requirements of each subsequent level.

5. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical, literary, and cultural development and contemporary character of the United States
- Use and interrogate a range of primary and secondary written, and/or oral and/or visual sources
- Understand and critically apply key concepts and scholarship in more than one separate discipline
- Recognise the opportunities and limits afforded by disciplinary perspectives

Subject specific skills

Successful students will be able to:

- Engage critically with different disciplinary approaches to the United States

- Possess the ability to integrate a diverse range of appropriate primary and secondary materials
- Command a range of techniques and methodologies, such as bibliographical, library and internet research skills, proficiency in reading and textual analysis, appreciation of theoretical models, and alertness to different interpretations of issues and events

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will be able to:

- Locate and evaluate information and ideas from a variety of sources, including on-line and digital materials
- Present materials in a written form, with clarity in the use of language, professional referencing, and lucid and effective layout
- Present materials orally in a clear and effective manner
- Write and think under pressure, and meet deadlines
- Organise their learning through self-management
- Record and reflect on their achievements
- Work with others in a constructive and respectful way

6. How is the Programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. They include the following:

- **Lectures** where the lecturer provides students with a framework for reading and independent study. Lectures may also involve use of audio-video materials.
- **Seminars** in groups of up to 20 students where key issues can be discussed in more depth. Students are expected to play a full part, and occasionally to lead, these discussions. In some modules seminars classes may also incorporate elements of formal lecturing, as well as audio-visual presentations.
- **Workshops** are literature classes which involve a mixture of formal presentation and small-group work, and are specifically designed to allow students to engage in detailed textual analysis of individual passages.
- **Independent study** based on directed reading from text books, research monographs, academic journals and/or viewing of visual materials, as well as detailed research investigations in primary texts.
- **Web-based learning** using the University's virtual online learning environment (KLE). The KLE is accessible to all students on and off campus and provides easy access to a wide range of resources and research tools, including access to documents, quizzes, discussion boards, assignments, announcements and blogs.

Apart from these formal activities, students are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any special learning needs they may have, with their Personal Tutors or module lecturers on a one-to-one basis.

These learning and teaching methods enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme in a variety of ways. For example:

- **Lectures** provide students with the tools and the knowledge to further their understanding of their subject, and help them to organize and focus their material in preparation for seminar discussion.
- **Seminars** differ in length, format and texture, depending upon the subject, but are essential components of each module, and invariably include individual or group presentations. They aim to provide a supportive environment for debate and discussion and provide an important opportunity for the expression and of individual ideas and interaction with those of others.

- **Independent study** through the research dissertation allows students, under the supervision of a specialist research-active teacher, to formulate relevant research questions, to devise an appropriate strategy for answering them, and to deliver the research results in appropriate narrative form.

7. Teaching Staff

The permanent teaching staff on the American Studies Principal Programme – who have a wide experience of higher education teaching in Britain, continental Europe and the United States – currently consists of full-time faculty members from the School of Humanities, embracing the disciplines of history, literature, geography and popular culture, and American politics specialists from the School of Politics, Philosophy, International Relations and Environment (SPIRE). All new academic staff undertake Keele's nationally accredited Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Programme; other qualifications possessed by American Studies faculty include the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

8. What is the Structure of the Programme?

The academic year runs from September to June and is divided into two semesters. The number of weeks of teaching will vary from course to course, but you can generally expect to attend scheduled teaching sessions between the end of September and mid-December, and from mid-January to the end of April.

Our degree courses are organised into modules. Each module is usually a self-contained unit of study and each is usually assessed separately with the award of credits on the basis of 1 credit = 10 hours of student effort. An outline of the structure of the programme is provided in the tables below.

There are three types of module delivered as part of this programme. They are:

- Compulsory core module – a module that you are required to study on this course;
- Optional core module – these allow you some limited choice of what to study from a list of modules;
- Programme approved elective module – subject-related modules that count towards the number of subject credits required by your degree

In Year 1 all Single Honours students must take two core modules in each semester. In the Autumn semester they take A Beginner's Guide to Contemporary America and Starting Out: an Introduction to American Literature. In the Spring semester they take New York, New York: an Introduction to American Literature and either The American Past: Explorations in US History or Introduction to American Politics. They may then choose in addition from a range of optional cores, programme approved electives, and free-standing electives.

In Year 2 all Single Honours students take two core modules per semester, choosing other modules from a range of optional cores and programme approved electives. Modules are listed in the table below.

In Year 3 all Single Honours students choose at least one American Studies module per semester, plus a year-long dissertation based on individual research. Modules are listed in the table below.

Year 1 (Level 4)

Compulsory Core modules	Credits	Programme Approved Elective modules	Credits
A Beginner's Guide to Contemporary America	15	Reading Film	15
Starting Out: An Introduction to American Literature	15	Historical Research and Writing Media in America	15

New York, New York: An Introduction to American Culture	15	Transatlantic Gothic: Studies in 19C English and American Literatures	15
Optional Core modules		Film Texts and Contexts 1	15
The American Past: Explorations in US History	15		
Debates in American Politics	15		

Year 2 (Level 5)

Optional Cores/Programme Approved Electives	Credits	Programme Approved Elective modules	Credits
The Romance of Fiction: History and Society in 19 th C American Literature	15	Analysing Culture	15
History of the US in the Twentieth Century	15	Politics and Cinema	15
Burning Crosses: Religion and American Culture	15	Global International Organisation	15
Discovering America: From Empires to Revolutions	15	US Government and Politics	15
From Modernity to Counterculture: American Literature and Social Criticism in the 20 th Century	15	Environmental Politics and Policy	15
The New World in Chains: Slavery and the Bonds of Race in America	15	Adaptation	15
Alfred Hitchcock's America	15	Power in the Modern World	15
The Detective and the American City	15	Writing for the Screen	15
		Peace, Conflict and Security	15
		Comparing the U.S. and Great Britain	15
		Imperialism and Empire	15
		Sources and Debates Why	15
		Policy Changes	15

Year 3 (Level 6)

Compulsory Core modules	Credits	Optional Cores/Programme Approved Electives	Credits
Dissertation in American Studies	30	Postcolonial and World Literature in English	15
Optional Cores/Programme Approved Electives		Representing the Self in British and American TV	15
Wild Woods and Wide Worlds: British and American Children's Literature	15	The US Presidency	15
Film Noir: The Dark Side of America	15		
Words and Pictures: The Contemporary American Graphic Novel	15	Programme Approved Elective modules	
"Eyes on the Prize" The Struggle for Civil Rights in America	15	Environmental Politics in the US	15
High Culture: Drink, Drugs and the	15		

American Dream			
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For further information on the content of modules currently offered please visit:

www.keele.ac.uk/recordsandexams/az

9. Final and intermediate awards

Credits required for each level of academic award are as follows:

Honours Degree	360 credits	You will require at least 120 credits at levels 4, 5 and 6 You must accumulate at least 255 credits in American Studies (out of 360 credits overall), with at least 60 credits in each of the three years of study, to graduate with a named single honours degree in American Studies.
Diploma in Higher Education	240 credits	You will require at least 120 credits at level 4 or higher and at least 120 credits at level 5 or higher
Certificate in Higher Education	120 credits	You will require at least 120 credits at level 4 or higher

American Studies with International Year: in addition to the above students must pass a module covering the international year in order to graduate with a named degree in American Studies with International Year. Students who do not complete, or fail the international year, will be transferred to the three-year American Studies programme.

10. How is the Programme assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used within American Studies at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the degree programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used within American Studies:

- **Unseen examinations and class tests** test students' knowledge of American Studies topics. Examinations may consist of essays, short answer and/or multiple choice questions
- **Essays** test the quality and application of subject knowledge. In addition they allow students to demonstrate their ability to carry out basic bibliographic research and to communicate their ideas effectively in writing in scholarly style using an appropriate referencing system
- **Research dissertations** enable students to explore in depth an area of particular interest through a substantial piece of focused research and writing, and test their ability to formulate and answer research questions
- **Oral presentations and reports** assess students' subject knowledge and understanding. They also test their ability to work effectively as members of a team, to communicate what they know orally and visually, and to reflect on these processes as part of their own personal development
- **Portfolios** may consist of a range of different pieces of work but routinely include a requirement that students provide some evidence of critical reflection on the development of their own learning

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless

there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

11. Contact Time and Expected Workload

This contact time measure is intended to provide you with an indication of the type of activity you are likely to undertake during this programme. The data is compiled based on module choices and learning patterns of students on similar programmes in previous years. Every effort is made to ensure this data is a realistic representation of what you are likely to experience, but changes to programmes, teaching methods and assessment methods mean this data is representative and not specific.

Undergraduate courses at Keele contain an element of module choice; therefore, individual students will experience a different mix of contact time and assessment types dependent upon their own individual choice of modules. The figures below are an example of activities that a student may expect on your chosen course by year/stage of study. Contact time includes scheduled activities such as: lecture, seminar, tutorial, project supervision, demonstration, practical classes and labs, supervised time in labs/workshop, fieldwork and external visits. The figures are based on 1,200 hours of student effort each year for full-time students.

Activity	Year 1 (Level 4)	Year 2 (Level 5)	Year 3 (Level 6)
Scheduled learning and teaching activities	18%	14%	17%
Guided independent Study	82%	61%	83%
Placements	0%	25%	0%

12. Accreditation

This programme does not have accreditation from an external body.

13. Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

A student who has completed a semester abroad will not normally be eligible to transfer onto the International Year option.

14. What are the typical admission requirements for the programme?

Subject	A-level	Subjects not included	International Baccalaureate	BTEC	Access to Higher Education Diploma	GCSE requirements
American Studies	BBB/ABC	None	32 points	DDM	Obtain Access to Higher Education Diploma with 30 Level 3 credits at Distinction	English Language @ C (or 4)

Applicants who are not currently undertaking any formal study or who have been out of formal education for more than 3 years and are not qualified to A-level or BTEC standard may be offered entry to the University's Foundation Year Programme.

Applicants for whom English is not a first language must provide evidence of a recognised qualification in English language. The minimum score for entry to the Programme is Academic IELTS 6.0 or equivalent.

Please note: All non-native English speaking students are required to undertake a diagnostic English language assessment on arrival at Keele, to determine whether English language support may help them succeed with their studies. An English language module may be compulsory for some students during their first year at Keele.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director. The University's guidelines on this can be found here:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/ga/accreditationofpriorlearning/>

15. Other learning opportunities

Study abroad (semester)

Students on the American Studies programme have the potential opportunity to spend a semester abroad in their second year studying at one of Keele's international partner universities.

Exactly which countries are available depends on the student's choice of degree subjects. An indicative list of countries is on the website (<http://www.keele.ac.uk/studyabroad/partneruniversities/>); however this does not guarantee the availability of study in a specific country as this is subject to the University's application process for studying abroad.

No additional tuition fees are payable for a single semester studying abroad but students do have to bear the costs of travelling to and from their destination university, accommodation, food and personal costs. Depending on the destination they are studying at additional costs may include visas, study permits, residence permits, and compulsory health checks. Students should expect the total costs of studying abroad to be greater than if they study in the UK, information is made available from the Global Education Team throughout the process, as costs will vary depending on destination

Whilst students are studying abroad any Student Finance eligibility will continue, where applicable students may be eligible for specific travel or disability grants. Students studying in Erasmus+ destinations may be eligible for grants as part of this programme. Students studying outside of this programme may be eligible for income dependent bursaries at Keele.

Students travel on a comprehensive Keele University insurance plan, for which there are currently no additional charges. Some governments and/or universities require additional compulsory health coverage plans; costs for this will be advised during the application process.

Study Abroad (International Year)

A summary of the International Year, which is a potential option for students after completion of year 2 (Level 5), is provided at Annex A.

16. Additional costs

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation.

We do not anticipate any further costs for this undergraduate programme.

17. Document Version History

Version history	Date	Notes
Date first created	October 2016	
Revision history		
Date approved		

Annex A

BA (Hons) American Studies with International Year

International Year Programme

Students registered for Single Honours American Studies may either be admitted for or apply to transfer during their period of study at Level 5 to the Single Honours 'American Studies with International Year'. Students accepted onto this programme will have an extra year of study (the International Year) at an international partner institution after they have completed Year 2 (Level 5) at Keele.

Students who successfully complete both the second year (Level 5) and the International Year will be permitted to progress to Level 6. Students who fail to satisfy the examiners in respect of the International Year will normally revert to the BA (Hons) American Studies and progress to Level 6 on that basis. The failure will be recorded on the student's final transcript.

Study at Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 will be as per the main body of this programme specification. The additional detail contained in this annex will pertain solely to students registered for 'BA (Hons) American Studies with International Year'.

International Year Programme Aims

In addition to the programme aims specified in the main body of the programme specification, the international year programme of study aims to provide students with:

1. Personal development as a student and a researcher with an appreciation of the international dimension of their subject
2. Experience of a different culture, academically, professionally and socially

Entry Requirements for the International Year

Students may apply to the 4-year programme during Level 5. Admission to the International Year is subject to successful application, interview and references from appropriate staff.

The criteria to be applied are:

- Academic Performance (an average of 60% across all modules at Level 5 is normally required)
- General Aptitude (to be demonstrated by application for study abroad, interview during the 2nd semester of year 2 (Level 5), and by recommendation of the student's personal tutor, 1st and 2nd year tutors and programme director)

Student Support

Students will be supported whilst on the International Year via the following methods:

- Phone or Skype conversations with Study Abroad tutor, in line with recommended Personal Tutoring meeting points.
- Support from the University's Global Education Team

Learning Outcomes

In addition to the learning outcomes specified in the main text of the Programme Specification, students who complete a Keele undergraduate programme with International Year will be able to:

- a. Describe, discuss and reflect upon the cultural and international differences and similarities of different learning environments
- b. Discuss the benefits and challenges of global citizenship and internationalisation
- c. Explain how their perspective on their academic discipline has been influenced by locating it within an international setting.

In addition, students who complete 'BA (Hons) American Studies with International Year' will be able to:

- i) Design, plan and critically evaluate critical projects within the field of American Studies, record relevant information accurately and systematically and be able to reflect upon a range of sources in a critical manner.
- ii) Integrate, apply and develop principles relating to American Studies, to describe and explain cultural, historical or political phenomena and reflect critically on problems relating to contemporary society and culture.

These learning outcomes will all be assessed by the submission of a satisfactory individual learning agreement, the successful completion of assessments at the partner institution and the submission of the reflective portfolio element of the international year module.

Course Regulations

Students registered for the BA (Hons) American Studies with International Year' are subject to the course specific regulations (if any) and the University regulations. In addition, during the International Year, the following regulations will apply:

Students undertaking the International Year must complete 120 credits, which must comprise *at least 40%* in the student's discipline area.

This may impact on your choice of modules to study, for example you will have to choose certain modules to ensure you have the discipline specific credits required.

Students are barred from studying any American Studies module with significant overlap to Level 6 modules to be studied on their return. Significant overlap with Level 5 modules previously studied should also be avoided.

Additional costs for the International Year

Tuition fees for students on the International Year will be charged at 15% of the annual tuition fees for that year of study, as set out in Section 1. The International Year can be included in your Student Finance allocation, to find out more about your personal eligibility see: www.gov.uk

Students will have to bear the costs of travelling to and from their destination university, accommodation, food and personal costs. Depending on the destination they are studying at additional costs may include visas, study permits, residence permits, and compulsory health checks. Students should expect the total costs of studying abroad be greater than if they study in the UK, information is made available from the Global Education Team throughout the process, as costs will vary depending on destination.

Students studying in Erasmus+ destinations may be eligible for grants as part of this programme. Students studying outside of this programme may be eligible income dependent bursaries at Keele.

Students travel on a comprehensive Keele University insurance plan, for which there are currently no additional charges. Some Governments and/or universities require additional compulsory health coverage plans; costs for this will be advised during the application process.