

Introduction

Asian American Studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines how the Asian American experience enriches the context of the United States and American Studies as a whole. This field of study holds an important role in exploring not only the Asian American experience as framed within the larger intellectual inquiries of race and ethnicity in national and global contexts but also issues of transnationality and diaspora. As Asian Americans become fastest growing minority population in the country that is quickly gaining visibility on a national level, Asian American Studies reflects the reality of our multiracial, multinational, and multiethnic country and fosters the development of critical thinking and social engagement through the lens of the Asian American experience that is essential to becoming global citizens.

As part of the third world movement on the West Coast in the 1960s that created African American Studies and Chicano/Latino Studies, Asian American Studies has since experienced intellectual growth as a valued field. With historical student and faculty activism, Asian American Studies has long gained popularity among colleges and universities across the country. Since its birth, Asian American Studies as an intellectual pursuit has expanded across the country as programs and departments in various universities and colleges, national associations, internationally-acclaimed journals and scholarship, and research centers.

Many colleges similar to our own have programs in Asian American Studies. The Five College Consortium (Amherst, Hampshire, Mt. Holyoke, Smith, and University of Massachusetts-Amherst), Wellesley, Claremont Colleges, University of Connecticut, Swarthmore College, Oberlin College, Vassar College, and Wesleyan College all have Asian American Studies institutionalized in their curriculum either as separate minors and programs or as part of Asian Studies/Asian American Studies. It is striking that most of these colleges and universities have similar resources to our own, yet Williams does not offer Asian American Studies as a institutionalized degree within the curriculum.

After surveying the interest in Asian American Studies at Williams for the past several years, we are currently unconvinced that a separate degree-holding program within Asian American Studies would be sustainable in the current Williams environment.

However, with students campaigning for an Asian American Studies program for more than two decades at Williams College, the consistent interest for Asian American Studies at Williams among students is clear. Many of the main, consistent courses with topics in Asian American Studies have been well-enrolled for the past several years and each year, students engage in theses and independent studies focused on aspects of Asian American Studies.

Though the consistent interest in this course of study is encouraging, many students at Williams are unaware the opportunities for taking Asian American Studies courses at Williams and are therefore unaware of the potential value of this field of study. We propose, therefore, to create an Asian American Studies program such that students potentially interested in this topic may have a suggested route of study to maneuver through the Williams College catalog. By creating an institutional niche in which students interested in this topic may turn to for formal academic advice and study, Williams College can both give students an easier access to these courses and faculty advisers and

allow the Davis Center, the Campaign for Asian American Studies at Williams, and interested faculty members to track student interest in this field of study.

We have asked relevant faculty members to give us a list of courses they believe are applicable to a list of recommended courses within the Asian American Studies program and have come up with the following proposed course recommendation list to be placed visibly within the course catalog as a program.

Asian American Studies Program at Williams College

As an intellectual interdisciplinary field, Asian American Studies provides a valuable critique of American history, society, and culture. Unlike Asian Studies which focuses on the Asian continent, Asian American Studies draws upon the experiences of Asian American citizens and immigrants to explore their critical influence on the construction of American society and culture. Moreover, Asian American Studies provides a unique lens for understanding the United States as a whole. Through its development of different perspectives on class, gender, and race in the United States, Asian American Studies forces us to re-examine American society and identity as a whole and the United States' ongoing military and economic links to Asia. In addition to its academic value, Asian American Studies also prepares students for positions of service and leadership in the growing Asian American community, in American society and internationally in this increasingly globalized world.

The broad array of relevant classes in this field allows students to develop new critical, analytical, and investigative means for understanding American national narratives and the United States' rapidly changing ethnic makeup. The field covers a history of more than 150 years and encompasses such diverse academic disciplines as sociology, English, women's, gender, and sexuality studies, history, law, art, political science, and philosophy among other fields. A survey of Asian American Studies at Williams College includes courses spanned across the humanities and social sciences. Below is a list of suggested courses for students interested in establishing a foundation in this course of study at Williams College.

Core Courses

AMST 222 : Cultural Politics in Asian America

AMST 238: Racial Formations and Transformations in America 1945-present (Not offered 2013-2014)

AMST 329: Cultures of War: US Wars in Asia and the Making of American Culture (Not offered 2013-2014)

COMP 324/ENGL 334 The Orientalist Sublime and the Politics of Horror

ENGL 219: Introduction to Asian American Literature (Not offered 2013-2014)

ENGL 377 Fall 2012 From Third Worldism to Transnationalism: The First Five Decades of Asian American Studies (Not offered 2013-2014)

HIST/AMST 284: Introduction to Asian American History

HIST 380: Comparative American Immigration History (Not offered 2013-2014)

HIST 384: Selected Topics in Asian American Studies (Not offered 2013-2014)

MUS 210T American Pop Orientalism

Race and Ethnic Studies

LATS/AMST 409 Comparative Transnationalisms

LATS/WGSS/AMST 313 Race, Gender, Beauty and Power

AMST 220/LATS 221 Urban Studies

LATS 206 Cycle of Socialization: Understanding Similarities, Bridging Differences

AFR/AMST/LATS/WGSS 306 Queer of Color Critique

ENGL 239 Imagining Immigrants

PSYC 341 Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

AFR/PSCI 253 Comparative Race and Ethnic Politics

PSCI 318 Declining Significance of Race and Racism in U.S. Politics?

HIST/AMST 469: Notions of Race and Ethnicity in American Culture (Not offered in 2013-2014)

HIST 377: Race and American Law

Diasporic Studies

COMP/ENGL 115 Rume in the Jungle: Major Postcolonial Writers and Movements

ENGL 206 We Aren't the World: Global Anglophone Literature in the 20th Century

REL 249/AMST 249/SOC 249 Asian Religious Diasporas: The New Chosen People?

CHIN/ANTH 223: Ethnic Minorities in China: Past and Present (Not offered 2013-2014)

Related Studies

COMP 351/ENGL 352 The Global Avant Garde in Literature and Film

HIST/ASST 21 The Making of Modern South Asia

HIST 320/ASST 322 Meanings and Memories: Re-visiting the Partition of India

COMP/JAPN 255 Love and Death in Modern Japanese Fiction

Winter Study

JAPN/COMP 10 Japanese Animation