



Department of American Culture

THE POWER

The Department of American Culture (AC) promotes socially and publically engaged scholarship and teaching aimed at understanding the struggles and creativity that have produced the cultural fabric of America. In particular, we seek to illuminate the significance of, the lived experience of, and the relation among race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and religion, within and extending beyond the borders of the United States.

Interdisciplinary connection sits at the heart of an excellent liberal arts college, and American Studies—which has historically negotiated between history, literature, and the social sciences—epitomizes the creative crossing of disciplines. Our faculty members have joint appointments in units ranging from History and English to Romance Languages and Film, Television, and Media. We are leaders at the University of Michigan in promoting the digital humanities. AC students explore America through traditional disciplines such as history, literature, and ethnography, and through emergent fields such as popular cultural studies, ethnic studies, and digital studies. Bristling with renowned scholars, many of whom are still in the early stages of their careers, the department faculty includes a MacArthur Award winner as well as several presidents of the American Studies Association. The Department of American Culture stands as a leader in American Studies nationally and promises to do so for the foreseeable future.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of American Culture makes a significant difference to the life of the university, the profession, and the non-academic world. We offer our undergraduates a culturally sophisticated education, emphasizing a new brand of American ethnic studies, one rooted in global migration and movement, transnational identities, and transforming technologies. We place such interests in dialogue with the world of cultural production and consumption—new media, music, visual culture, film, and advertising. And we underpin the entire enterprise with a deep appreciation for the history, literature, and art that has been and continues to be produced from American centers and margins. Our undergraduate students frequently turn to civic careers in public arts and history, education, politics, and law while others enter into publishing, marketing, advertising, journalism, television, or film. AC's doctoral graduates are found in every kind of higher educational institution, from community colleges to the Ivy League. AC is a center for diversity within the University of Michigan, with a majority of women and faculty of color and with a creative and integrative approach to Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies, Latina/o Studies, and Native American Studies, all of which call the department home. And our mix of senior, mid career, and young faculty has created a center of American Studies without rival.

THE IMPACT

As one of the oldest and most well-established American Studies programs in the nation, AC continues to make undergraduate education our first priority. We also are committed to public scholarship and cultural and intellectual programming, including residencies and lectures, in partnership with public arts organizations, nonprofits, and educational institutions.

Undergraduate Off-Campus Research Opportunities

\$50,000 to \$100,000 annually

Juniors and seniors benefit enormously from gaining experience in such off-campus research methods as archival work, direct observation, or interviewing. Funding would provide travel and lodging costs for carefully designed major research projects.

Undergraduate Internship Opportunities

\$10,000 to \$50,000 annually

Students hone their practical skills in real world situations by participating in internships across the United States and in countries around the world. For liberal arts students, this experience is critical. With these opportunities, our students apply their skills in practical ways and gain experience and exposure that lead to future career possibilities. Your gift to the college internship program will help support American Culture students with funding for summer and academic year internships. We seek gifts for internships that will provide students with support ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to help cover travel and living costs, as well as stipends for students in unpaid summer internships who, without such support,

would not be able to participate because of financial barriers. American Culture students have held internships in museums, social justice organizations, relief agencies, the popular culture industry, and media outlets. An endowed gift of \$100,000 will provide funding for two to five students.

Undergraduate Writing Awards

\$10,000 annually

Each year, the department awards two named prizes to American Culture and/or Latina/o Studies majors for the best essays on topics related to the field of American Studies/Ethnic Studies. The establishment of these annual awards in 2007 marked AC's 55th anniversary and celebrates its commitment to support our undergraduate students in the pursuit of academic excellence. Support for this fund would provide the resources to expand these awards to include superbly written and organized digital productions.

Graduate Research Fellowship in Public Scholarship

\$10,000 to \$50,000 annually

Gifts to support research fellowships in public scholarship will build mutually beneficial partnerships between American Culture graduate students and a broad spectrum of cultural and arts institutions—museums, historic sites, sites of conscience, performing and visual arts organizations, nonprofits and other community groups, government agencies, schools and other educational partners. Fellowships provide the resources for graduate students to attend workshops and conferences for networking and training opportunities, support a graduate student's work on a public scholarship project in the planning, pilot, or implementation phase, or supply funding for the planning, writing, and producing of collaborative publications that grow out of the student's community-engaged scholarship.

Public Scholarship Activities

\$10,000 annually

Support for public scholarship activities including:

- The Annual American Culture Community Showcase and Celebration, which brings together the campus and community partners on projects and courses that have been carried out with The Gallery Project, Detroit Summer/Boggs Center, Arab American National Museum/ACCESS, Museo del Norte, Inside/Out Literary Arts Project, Digital Culture projects, and more.
- Funding for speakers, conferences, and workshops to build the department's capacity to undertake public scholarship by: mastering new methodologies (ethnography, exhibition, etc.); learning about different forms of public scholarship; familiarizing ourselves with the work of non-academic centers of reflection, theory-building, and action; and enhancing our understanding of trends in public scholarship in pertinent fields.

Strategic Fund

\$10,000 to \$50,000 annually

The strength of our strategic fund is critical to our ability to pursue new opportunities and enrich ongoing activities. Contributions to the American Culture Strategic Fund can help support crucial activities such as:

- *Undergraduate Arts in Action:* Undergraduate students and faculty could collaborate to bring a speaker, artist, or performer to campus with the goal of sponsoring three to five cultural activities each year.
- *Public Intellectuals:* AC would host public intellectuals on campus to forge tighter links among the cultural producers and analysts that cluster around the department.

Teaching Initiative Fund

\$10,000 to \$50,000 expendable

Gifts will help promote the design and teaching of interactive, skill-based courses in larger undergraduate classrooms (30 students or more) in which these instructors will engage students through a non-lecture format. It would enable associate and full professors with national reputations and established research achievements to become familiar with continually emerging interactive technologies and receive training in course development utilizing these types of active learning. Also, it could provide additional support as needed for faculty members to organize simulations or other group-learning projects in class.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will enable the best and brightest minds to experience a liberal arts education, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.

CONTACT INFO

LSA Advancement

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

101 N. Main Street, Suite 850

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

P.734.615.6333 // F.734.647.3061

lsa.umich.edu

lsa.umich.edu/ac