

Example #1

American Studies: Law and Society Emphasis Outline

The emphasis I have chosen for my American Studies Major is Law and Society. My double majors in Political Science and American Studies have sparked in me a passionate interest in American politics, law, society and criminal justice. I feel that a Law and Society emphasis in my American Studies major will help direct my interests even further. From the politics that run our country to the laws that dictate our every action, I feel compelled to learn more about the society that is created and perpetuated on the shoulders of others in powerful and decision making positions. How is it that rules, regulations and laws are created? Why do we conform to, or rebel from such man made boundaries? What is it about government, law, and society that make us who we are and how we act? In taking in-depth and focused classes on these subjects I have achieved a better understanding of just that. Classes such as SOC 150-Criminology, SOC 152-Juvenile Delinquency, POL 124-Politics of Global Inequality and POL 162-Electoral Politics have helped me learn more on human behavior and our nearly universal goal of controlling, governing and mediating societies on a local, state, national and even international level. My findings and knowledge gained from such coursework have inspired, surprised, challenged, frustrated and at times bewildered me. I believe that it is these different emotions and feelings that I have felt as I worked towards a greater understanding of Law and Society that curb close mindedness and promote a deeper understanding of the infinitesimal ways that humans can interact, convene, cooperate and share their ideas for a common goal. Through my classes in law and society I have been able to enter the minds of great political and sociological thinkers of past and present and see where they are coming from, on all sides of

the discipline, not simply the side I feel is best. Furthermore, I understand that the boundless political and societal interests of man do not simply lie on a two dimensional horizontal line. I know that there are many views and ideas that cannot be compared simply by labeling them with a particular political or sociological party, group or interest. My studies in both Political Science and American Studies have furthered my understanding of the differing and shared interests of man. And in continuing my education after my time at UC Davis I would like to be able to expand upon contemporary thought regarding American Studies and research further into how different cultures in America affect and shape the government, politics, laws and societies that dictate our nearly every move, every day, of ever American.

Example #2

Emphasis Plan

CMN 105
CMN 141
PSC 151
SOC 172
CRD 152

I'm majoring in American Studies with an emphasis in "Societal Development." The classes I took are all things that feed into and define a society. Language, gender, race, religion, and mass media all play a huge role in community development and those are the classes I took to focus on my emphasis.

I took CMN 105 Semantic and Pragmatic Functions in Language to learn about how people communicate. Semantics and Pragmatics explained how we use language as well as non-verbal cues in daily life to get by with other people. In a similar vein PSC 151 Social Psychology was also about daily interaction in society but in a broader category because it dealt with how people see each other and themselves. It addressed how that's changed over time. This is key in how society is developing and changing in light of technology. SOC 172 Ideology of Race, Class, and Gender addressed the facets of key differences between everyone in varying communities and the ways they've conflicted and united since the early 1800's in the United States.

In addition I took CMN 141 Media Effects and learned about the effect of media in today's communities as well as the past in all its different forms such as television, radio, internet.

The class that tied all these ideas of societal development together was CRD 152 Theory and Practice of Community Development. CRD 152 stressed the way communities have been developing over time as well as the issues that have arisen as a result of individual differences.

Example #3

Emphasis Plan

Courses taken: ENL 180; ENLE 122; HIS 174C; EDU 110; EDU 120

For my emphasis within the American Studies major, I chose to follow the Youth Cultures and Education path, though with a bit of a literary slant. I completed five interrelated courses during my time at UC Davis and even one abroad in New Zealand.

My education courses provided a solid background in the role of education in society, and the ways in which our culture values—and doesn't value—education. Educational Psychology (EDU 110) focused more closely on education at an individual level, examining the child in relation to learning. Philosophical and Social Foundations of Education (EDU 120) takes a much more broad approach, looking closely at education in American history and exploring the many different roles it plays in our society and culture. These courses were interesting as a framework for understanding the socialization of children in American society and the cultural approach to education and educational values.

My English courses provided useful and engaging surveys of popular literature and their lasting interactions with society. Children's Literature (ENL 180) focused on stories and novels written for children, examining recurring themes that seem to resonate with youth throughout history. This course was incredibly interesting, especially when approached with both an American studies framework and a background in educational techniques. My course in Contemporary U.S. Fiction (ENLE 122) was all the more fascinating because I took it while abroad in New Zealand, and this offered many unique insights into how other cultures view American fiction and culture. This class opened up so many perspectives and questions that were new to me, and challenging my own perceptions of the culture I studied and lived in.

My history course, The United States Since World War II, 1945 to the Present (HIS 174C) deepened my understanding and knowledge of recent events in America. This provided me with a vital and useful background from which to understand the cultural and societal phenomena I studied through my major. It was especially interesting when linked to the novels I read in my Contemporary U.S. Fiction class, as I was able to more fully situate my understanding of the era in which each novel was written.

Overall, my emphasis enabled me to more deeply understand American culture, as well as critically approach the course of my studies. I feel confident in my abilities to read, write, and think critically, and to understand the various frameworks in which I approach any study of American society and culture.