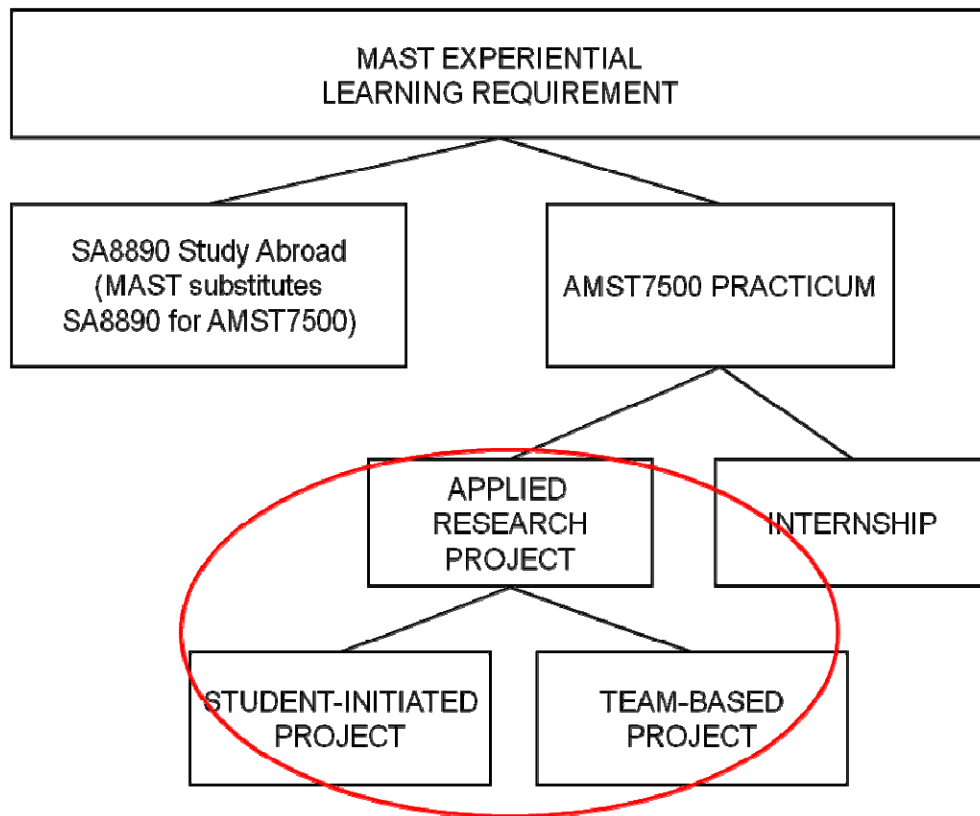


# AMST7500 PRACTICUM: APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY



## OVERVIEW:

Students choosing the APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT track will develop a substantial paper, interpretive plan, or other product that is informed by and draws on American Studies principles and knowledge. Through participation in this track, the student will hone skills relevant to carrying out independent research, analysis, and interpretation. Designed to embrace students' interests and professional goals, the project may take any number of forms, including (but not limited to) a research paper, exhibit, curricular materials, public interpretive project, program assessment plan, community documentation program, or similar work.

The APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT may take one of two forms:

(1) **TEAM-BASED PROJECT.** Students may join a team of students and faculty to research and/or interpret a larger theme or develop a multi-component project. Team-based projects will be initiated and broadly conceptualized by faculty members, but may take on a collaborative structure in implementation. Team-based projects **MUST** be announced prior to the registration period for the semester in which they are to be offered.

(2) **STUDENT-INITIATED PROJECT.** Students may initiate their own independent applied research projects. Students intending to work independently on an applied research project are responsible for coordinating with a faculty member appropriate to and willing to serve as Project Supervisor for the work. (Faculty are not required to serve as Project Supervisors for student-initiated Applied Research Projects.)

#### FACULTY CREDIT:

Faculty receive one course reassignment (scheduled in consultation with their department chair and the M.A. Director) for every 10 students whom they directly supervise for completion of the AMST7500 Applied Research Project course. Faculty members who provide such supervision are responsible for turning in, via email or comparable paper memo, a certification of completion of supervision, in addition to a course grade report. The Director of the M.A., with support from the program's administrative associate, is responsible for maintaining records of faculty supervision of applied research projects. In cases where more than one faculty member is involved in a collaborative project including students, students may either designate one faculty member as supervisor, or faculty may receive half credit.

**FACULTY MEMBERS: THINKING OF DEVELOPING A  
TEAM-BASED AMST7500 APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT?**

**I am! What do I do?**

Develop a brief description of the project (approximately 500 words). The description should demonstrate that the project is informed by and draws on American Studies principles and knowledge. Besides providing an overview of the work, the description should also include course objectives and any unusual expectations (e.g., “we’ll be digging every Saturday for eight weeks in the blazing sun”), and a brief outline of student obligations or expectations. For example, if the outcomes or products will be planned by the team as the semester progresses, that should be explained in the description. If the students will be assigned roles, explain that.

Submit the completed project description to the Director of the M.A. by the date indicated below.

Proposals for:	Due date:
Summer	December 1
Fall	February 1
Spring	July 15

The deadlines are set early so that MAST may advertise the opportunities to students and allow them sufficient time to plan their MA program. Deadlines will be waived only in exceptional circumstances.

Once approved by the Director of the M.A., the above description will become the core of the Course Contract. Students choosing to participate in the project will obtain, read, sign, and submit the course contract to the Director of the M.A. to obtain a permit to register for the course.

**Can I see some examples of team-based Applied Research Projects?**

Several examples of the project option are briefly described below. These examples are meant to be illustrative rather than prescriptive.

*Perceptions of Place* Students will research young adults' knowledge and perceptions of place through surveys and observational research of 18-25 year olds at three Cobb County landmarks: the base of the mountain road at Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Park, the main Macy's entrance to the Town Center Mall, and the KSU campus oval. Survey respondents will be asked to identify the cardinal directions, the name of the watershed in which the site lies, the prior use(s) of the site, and their feelings attached to the site. Demographic data sought will include age, gender, hometown, years of residence in the county, typical use patterns of site and other landmarks. Students will compile and analyze their findings into a final research report that will be made available to the owners/managers of the site under study.

*Immigrant Communities in Northwest Georgia* In this project students will work to document and analyze some aspect of immigrant communities and their recent histories. Students will work

with organizations such as the Cobb Immigrant Alliance or the Atlanta chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens to study and interpret recent community formation and to identify areas of research focus. Students will collect life stories of community members by completing oral histories, video, and/or photography studies, or to facilitate self-documentation by participants. Students will produce a research paper, public or online exhibit and/or launch an archival collection at the KSU Library.

*Queer Atlanta* Students will work in conjunction with the Atlanta History Center (which houses an extensive collection of artifacts collected in preparation for *The Unspoken Past: Atlanta Lesbian and Gay History, 1940-1970*) to develop an archival and interpretive site investigating that will might broaden the parameters of southern history to include individuals who are queer identified. Students will launch the project by examining queer representations of Southern place and interrogate attributes of the South and Southernness particular to Atlanta. For example, the Southern Comfort Conference, the nation's largest and oldest transgender conference held annually in Atlanta, is uniquely both Southern and queer. Students would search archives and conduct oral histories to document and interpret the history of queer Atlanta.

*Oral History of Local Identity Project* Students will conduct, record, and interpret oral histories of at least three individuals connected with a locality they have chosen to research. Based on their findings, students will compile either a performance text or a research paper that interrogates the (dis)connections between secondary and primary research. During the final exam period, these findings will be shared in a public forum, followed by discussion and a required post-mortem reflection.

*LGBTQ Resource Center* Students who are involved in the establishment of an LGBTQ Resource Center will trace the history, development, and nature of LGBTQ activity at KSU. They will research the need and rationale for resources for the queer community beyond the Kennesaw Pride Alliance, a self-identified social group whose scope is limited to building awareness and tolerance. Students will survey members of KSU's LGBTQ community, including students, faculty, and staff—as well as allies to this community. They will explore comparable resource facilities at universities across the country to discover a model most aligned with KSU's needs and strategic plan. The final product will be a prospectus to be presented to the Chief Diversity Officer and Provost outlining student findings that also include the objectives and structure of the proposed LGBTQ Resource Center.

*Theatre of the Oppressed* Students will read about and practice forum theatre (wherein actors perform a skit of successful oppression, followed by a re-play performance, during which spect-actors get to stop the action and join the improvisation) and invisible theatre (where actors perform in public without onlookers realizing it is a rehearsed performance). Audiences to all of these events will be polled and/or interviewed, whenever feasible. After several performances of both types of TO, students will reflect on the efficacy of Theatre of the Oppressed as a method of social change.

*Performing the Other* Students will propose and conduct ethnographic research about a group they consider "Other" (in terms of race, gender, sexuality, class, geography, etc.), with the goal of developing a performance text to be shared at the end of the semester in a public forum. This

practicum will stress the importance of ethical representation and will be framed by interrogating the responsibilities of the ethnographer (first as theory, later as reflection on practice).

*The Housing Projects* The Housing Projects is a long-term initiative that facilitates research, analysis, and interpretation of metropolitan housing and cultures; fosters community-based research, collaboration, and inquiry; and assesses learning and professional outcomes of community-based humanities research. Students participating in The Housing Projects will complete an original research project focusing in some way on housing, housing cultures and practices, neighborhoods and resource allocation, housing inequality, or urban/suburban housing landscapes. Future offerings of the Housing Projects as an AMST7500 will allow students to develop public interpretive projects on similar topics.

### **How do students find out about my project?**

Topics and descriptions of team-based research projects will be posted to the MAST student listserv, AMST website, and will be readily available to students in the MAST office.

### **So what do students have to do during the semester?**

Course Contract and Registration: Students interested in registering for a team-based AMST7500 Applied Research Project shall obtain, read, sign, and return a copy of the Course Contract to the faculty Project Supervisor (or the program's administrative associate) at least one week prior to final registration for the semester in which the student plans to enroll in AMST7500. Course contracts for specific projects will be available at the MAST office. Questions regarding the contract or the project should be directed to the faculty Project Supervisor.

Project Plan: Each student will work with the faculty Project Supervisor to develop a Project Plan that outlines the student's project, goals, intended learning outcomes, and work plan (including a breakdown of grading), and final product. The Project Plan should include all project requirements and a draft calendar. All plans MUST include a reflective journal, oral presentation, final reflective report, and a final project. Additionally, the Project Plan will include a reading list appropriate to the chosen site/work.

Journal: The student will keep a weekly account of his/her experiences as he/she completes his/her research, analysis and interpretation. The student will explore details of his/her ongoing project, problems, relationships, and insights and observations, but also make connections to larger cultural studies issues that are central to his/her experience. The student is also strongly encouraged to make direct ties between the project, class work and American Studies literature and theory. The journal is due to the faculty Project Supervisor electronically twice during the semester: at midterm and at the conclusion of the semester.

Oral Presentation: The student will make an oral presentation on his/her work at the end of the semester. The students should prepare for a fifteen minute presentation, which should incorporate slides, visual aids, or handouts as appropriate. Approximately five minutes should be devoted to how the project helped the student realize the learning outcomes outlined in the Project Plan as well as his/her broader academic goals at the University.

Final Reflective Report. The student will submit a final reflective report of approximately five pages that details what he/she learned, how the project fit with the student's broader academic goals at the University, and how the project internship illuminated American cultural studies issues by the due date established in the Project Plan.

Class meetings: If a Practicum is organized as a team-based investigation, the student may be required to meet regularly with team members to discuss project design, progress, related readings, or other relevant issues. Any such requirements will be outlined in the Project Plan.

Final Project. The final form and expectations of the project (e.g., paper, interpretive plan, proposal) shall be determined by the individual, team, and/or faculty Project Supervisor, as appropriate.

Grading:

Weighting for grades may be outlined in the Project Plan. Otherwise, the following weighting will apply:

- Final Project/Essay: 40%
- Field Notes Journal: 20%
- Final Reflective Report 20%
- Oral Presentation: 20%

A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=0-59