

URBAN STUDIES AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS (BA)

Department Website (<https://as.nyu.edu/sca.html>)

NYSED: 43989 HEGIS: 2214.00 CIP: 45.1201

Program Description

Urban studies is an established and interdisciplinary area of inquiry—focusing on cities and their regions, urban social life, cultures, the built and natural environment, economics, politics, and policy—that is strengthened when students are strongly grounded in a traditional academic discipline. It is also an area of inquiry that has traditionally privileged dynamics of class, inequality, and labor. Social and cultural analysis, meanwhile, provides a rigorous framework for thinking about questions of difference along the lines of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and indigeneity. The joint major in Urban Studies and Social and Cultural Analysis introduces students to the study of cities and metropolitan areas as complex sites of difference viewed through the lenses of feminist and postcolonial theory as well as of critical race and ethnic studies.

The major takes full advantage of NYU's location and builds on the University's long-standing relationships with key urban institutions, both public and private, ranging from planning agencies to urban arts and culture institutions.

This program of study trains students in geographic information systems (GIS), a powerful mapping tool that many will find useful in their future careers. The major prepares students for careers in urban policy and planning; community organization and advocacy; civic affairs; urban arts and culture; immigration policy and racial/social justice; housing and real estate; scholarly research in urban humanities and social science; and careers in teaching and academia.

Students should consult with advisers in both the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis and the Program in Urban Studies.

Honors Program

This major program of study does not currently offer an honors track.

Admissions

New York University's Office of Undergraduate Admissions supports the application process for all undergraduate programs at NYU. For additional information about undergraduate admissions, including application requirements, see How to Apply (<https://www.nyu.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/how-to-apply.html>).

Program Requirements

The joint major requires twelve 4-credit courses (48 credits) completed with a grade of C or better (courses graded Pass/Fail do not count). It comprises six courses in urban studies (24 credits; students must take crosslisted courses under the URBS-UA rubric) and six in social and cultural analysis (24 credits) as outlined below. All major electives must be chosen from a list of approved courses and/or in consultation with a major adviser.

Course	Title	Credits
General Education Requirements		
First-Year Seminar		4
EXPOS-UA 1	Writing as Inquiry	4
Foreign Language ¹		16
Quantitative Reasoning		4
Physical Science		4
Life Science		4
Texts and Ideas		4
Cultures and Contexts		4
Expressive Culture		4
Major Requirements		
<i>Urban Studies Requirements</i>		
URBS-UA 102	The City ²	4
URBS-UA 201	Geographic Information Systems ³	4
URBS-UA 301	Urban Lab ⁴	4
<i>Urban Studies Major Electives</i>		
Select three designated urban studies electives. ⁵		12
<i>Social and Cultural Analysis Requirements</i>		
SCA-UA 101	Social and Cultural Analysis 101	4
One course selected from designated Core, Approaches, or Intersections courses ⁶		4
SCA-UA 90	Advanced Research Seminar	4
<i>Social and Cultural Analysis Major Electives</i>		
Select three designated social and cultural analysis electives		12
Electives		
Other Elective Credits		32
Total Credits		128

¹ The foreign language requirement is satisfied upon successful completion through the Intermediate level of a language. This may be accomplished in fewer than 16 credits, but those credits must then be completed as elective credit.

² Formerly Approaches to Metropolitan Studies (SCA-UA 601).

³ Identical to UPADM-GP 283.

⁴ Prerequisite: URBS-UA 102.

⁵ One of the three electives must focus on global (i.e., non-US) content.

⁶ To be chosen from: CORE-UA 529 Cultures and Contexts: Contemporary Latino Cultures; CORE-UA 534 Cultures and Contexts: The Black Atlantic; CORE-UA 539 Cultures and Contexts: Asian/Pacific/American Cultures; SCA-UA 201 Approaches to American Studies; SCA-UA 230 Intersections: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in U.S. History; SCA-UA 401 Approaches to Gender and Sexuality Studies; and SCA-UA 747 Introduction to Native American and Indigenous Studies: The Politics of Indigeneity. Core courses must be taught by SCA faculty.

Sample Plan of Study

Course	Title	Credits
1st Semester/Term		
URBS-UA 102	The City	4
Foreign Language I		4
EXPOS-UA 1	Writing as Inquiry	4
Texts and Ideas		4
Credits		16
2nd Semester/Term		
SCA-UA 101	Social and Cultural Analysis 101	4

Foreign Language II		4
Cultures and Contexts		4
First-Year Seminar		4
Credits		16
3rd Semester/Term		
One SCA Approaches, Intersections, or Core Course		4
Urban Studies Major Elective (#1 of 3)		4
Foreign Language III		4
Expressive Culture		4
Credits		16
4th Semester/Term		
URBS-UA 201	Geographic Information Systems	4
Social and Cultural Analysis Major Elective (#1 of 3)		4
Foreign Language IV		4
Quantitative Reasoning		4
Credits		16
5th Semester/Term		
Urban Studies Major Elective (#2 of 3)		4
Social and Cultural Analysis Major Elective (#2 of 3)		4
Physical Science		4
Degree Elective		4
Credits		16
6th Semester/Term		
Urban Studies Major Elective (#3 of 3)		4
Social and Cultural Analysis Major Elective (#3 of 3)		4
Life Science		4
Degree Elective		4
Credits		16
7th Semester/Term		
URBS-UA 301	Urban Lab	4
Degree Elective		4
Degree Elective		4
Degree Elective		4
Credits		16
8th Semester/Term		
SCA-UA 90	Advanced Research Seminar	4
Degree Elective		4
Degree Elective		4
Degree Elective		4
Credits		16
Total Credits		128

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of program requirements, students are expected to have acquired:

1. Broad knowledge of the development of cities and metropolitan areas in the contexts of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and indigeneity.
2. Familiarity with the diversity of social scientific and humanistic theories that inform urban research.
3. An understanding of the relationship of urban life to racial and ethnic identity as well as to gender and sexuality—all topics central to both social and cultural analysis and the study of the city.
4. The ability to conduct research on urban topics using the methodological tools of social and cultural analysis.

Policies

Program Policies

Double Counting of Courses

Majors may share (double count) two courses with a second major (or a minor), with permission from the other department/program.

Restrictions on Declaring Other Majors and Minors

Students majoring in Urban Studies and Social and Cultural Analysis cannot declare a second major and/or a minor in Africana Studies, American Studies, Asian/Pacific/American Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Metropolitan Studies (replaced by the joint Urban Studies majors as of fall 2025), Latino Studies, or Social and Cultural Analysis.

Advanced Standing Credit by Examination

Credits from Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and any other similar examinations cannot count toward the requirements of this major.

Transfer Students

In accordance with College of Arts and Science policy, transfer students must complete at least one-half of this major while in residence at New York University. In addition, at least half of the Urban Studies courses and half of the Social and Cultural Analysis courses for this major must be completed at NYU. Transfer students may petition the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis and/or the Program in Urban Studies (as appropriate) with syllabi and reading lists to count specific transfer courses toward the major.

Note that all transfer students (whether internal or external) must satisfy a residency requirement of 64 credits in College of Arts and Science (-UA) coursework to earn their NYU baccalaureate degree. Although this major may allow (with advisement) some courses in other NYU schools (and at NYU portal campuses) to count as urban studies major electives, transfer students cannot count them toward the 64-credit -UA requirement.

NYU Policies

University-wide policies can be found on the New York University Policy pages (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/nyu/policies/>).

College of Arts and Science Policies

A full list of relevant academic policies can be found on the CAS Academic Policies page (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/undergraduate/arts-science/academic-policies/>).