Universiteit Leiden

Course and Examination Regulations

valid as of 1 September 2026

Programme-specific section:

Master's Programme: North American Studies

These Course and Examination Regulations (henceforth OER) have been drawn up in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act [*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*; WHW] (henceforth the Act) and the following Leiden University regulations:

- the Leiden Register of Study Programmes Framework Document;
- the Academic Calendar;
- the Regulations for Student Registration, Tuition Fees and Examination Fees;
- the Regulations for Admission to Master's Programmes;
- the Online Proctoring Protocol Leiden University.

The model OER are laid down in Dutch and then translated into English. In the event that there are differences between the two versions, the Dutch version will prevail.

Pursuant to Article 7.14 of the Act, the Faculty Board regularly evaluates the OER and considers, for the purpose of monitoring and adjusting the study load, how much time it takes students to comply. In accordance with Article 9.18 of the Act, the departmental committee is assigned the task of annually assessing the implementation of the OER.

These Course and Examination Regulations consist of two sections:

- a faculty section that is the same for all master's programmes and
- a section that contains information that is specific to a particular programme, what is known as the programme-specific section of the Course and Examination Regulations.

In the text below the relevant articles will refer to this programme-specific section. Other articles are included in the faculty section.

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Chapter 2 Description of the Programme

Article 2.1 Objectives of the programme

The programme has the following objectives:

1. to enable students to acquire academic knowledge, understanding and skills, and train them in the use of scientific methods in the field of North American Studies;
2. to enable students to develop the following academic and professional skills:
   - independent academic reasoning and conduct,
   - the ability to analyse complex problems,
   - the ability to clearly report academic results, both in writing and orally;
3. to prepare students for an academic career and further education;
4. to prepare students for a career outside academia.

Article 2.2 Specialisations

Not applicable.

Article 2.3 Learning outcomes

Graduates of the programme have attained the following learning outcomes, listed according to the Dublin descriptors:

1. Knowledge and understanding

a. comprehensive knowledge and understanding of major issues in the history, politics, and culture of the United States, with a focus on themes like emancipation struggles, migration, global interactions and conflicts, civil and human rights, cultural identities, and environmental justice, as well as the main scholarly and theoretical debates on these issues;

b. historical understanding of the discourse of U.S. exceptionalism and the ability to reflect critically on it.

c. knowledge and understanding of the United States in relation to the regions of North America and other parts of the world;

d. knowledge of and insight into research methods that are used in the field of North American Studies;

e. knowledge of and insight into the availability of digital tools and databases in the field of North American Studies.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

a. the ability to conduct independent research in the area of North American Studies, thereby showing the ability to comprehend and apply relevant theoretical insights and multidisciplinary methodological approaches;

b. the ability to describe and justify the adopted research methods;

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c. the ability to independently formulate a clear and well-argued research question that is based on a problem that reflects insight into the key discussions and methods of the field;

d. the ability to identify and collect primary and secondary sources in the field of North American Studies in conventional and digital archives;

e. the ability to critically analyse primary sources and situate them in their cultural and historical context;

f. the ability to apply knowledge of North American history and culture to current issues and developments;

g. the ability to apply the acquired skills of analysis, research and communication in the field of North American Studies to other fields and professional contexts in which academic training at master's level is necessary or useful;

3. Judgment

a. insight into the potential of (digital) sources and databases in the field of North American Studies and the ability to compare and make critical use of them;
b. the ability to critically evaluate and utilise primary and secondary sources, to develop viable research questions, and construct an extended argument in the form of a master's thesis in the area of North American Studies;
c. the ability to judge the relative merits of academic opinions and scholarly arguments on contemporary developments in North American Studies;

4. Communication

a. the ability to orally present and defend in correct academic English the result of individual and/or group research, including the use of digital presentation software;

b. the ability to effectively communicate research results in correct academic English in various formats, such as book reviews, research essays, and a master's thesis, as well as using digital formats, such as podcasts;

c. the ability to provide constructive feedback to, and formulate criticism of, the work of others and the ability to evaluate the value of such criticism and feedback on one's own work and incorporate it;

d. the ability to engage in academic debates about major issues in North American Studies;

5. Learning skills

a. the ability to reflect critically on one's own learning process and functioning, both individually and in a team, and on one's own contribution to the learning output;

b. the learning abilities required to be able to follow post-master's professional training or a PhD program training of a largely self-determined or autonomous nature.

Article 2.5 **Study load**

The programme has a study load of 60 credits.

Article 2.8 **Language of instruction**

2.8.1. Subject to the Code of Conduct on the Language of Instruction and Examination[1] the language in which the instruction is given and in which the examinations and final examinations are held is English. Students are expected to have an adequate command of the language of instruction and examination in the programme, in accordance with the requirements stated in Article 5.2.3. As appropriate, the Faculty publishes the OER in English for English-taught programmes.

[1] Code of Conduct on Language of Instruction

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2.8.2. Contrary to Article 2.8.1, in individual cases the Board of Examiners can permit the student to write the final thesis in another language, in accordance with the Guideline on Language Policy.[2]

Chapter 3 Curriculum

Article 3.1 **Compulsory components**

3.1.1 The programme includes compulsory components worth a total study load of 60 credits. These compulsory components include the set components from which a student is obliged to choose.

Chapter 4 Examinations, Final Examination and Further Education

Article 4.2 **Obligatory sequence**

4.2.1 Not applicable.

Article 4.3 **Form of examination**

4.3.6 Not applicable.

Chapter 5 Admission to the Programme as of September 2027 or February 2028

Article 5.1 **Confirmation of admission**

See the faculty section.

Article 5.2 **Admission to the programme**

5.2.1 Holders of one of the following degrees may be admitted to the programme (Article 7.30b (1) of the Act):

a. Not applicable. No direct admission, see Article 5.2.1b.

b. A bachelor's degree from a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic Bachelor's degree, including the General Academic Skills listed in Appendix B of the Faculty section of these regulations; and
- possess knowledge and understanding of the defining events and developments in the history and culture of the United States and/or knowledge and understanding of the canonical works of American literature; applicants should, for example, have a Bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university in the field of American Studies or another Bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university in Humanities or Social Sciences that includes components in the field of American Studies worth at least 30 credits;

Applicants who have a Bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university in Humanities or Social Sciences and who have completed the minor in American Studies at Leiden University are considered to have fulfilled this requirement.

Applicants with a Bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university in International Studies who

- have completed all area courses for North America worth 20 credits, and

[2] Guideline on Language Policy

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- have written their BA Thesis on North America and/or completed at least one optional course worth 10 credits which is included in the minor or premaster programme in American Studies (as specified in article 5.4)

are considered to have fulfilled all of the requirements mentioned above.

c. a bachelor's degree and additionally having passed the prescribed pre-master's/bridging programme pursuant to article 5.4.1. Students may overrun the allotted time for the prescribed pre-masters/bridging programme by one semester (in case of a pre-master's/bridging programme of 30 EC or less) or one study year (in case of a pre-master's/bridging programme of more than 30 EC).

5.2.2 Any person who fails to meet the degree requirements or prescribed pre-master's requirement referred to in 5.2.1 may submit a request to the Board of Admissions. The Board of Admissions assesses whether the applicant may be granted admission to the programme.

To this end, the Board of Admissions assesses whether the applicant possesses sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills at the same level as a bachelor's degree or related bachelor's degree as referred to in 5.2.1, (a) and (b) or whether they meet these conditions after additional requirements have been met.

The Board of Admissions assesses, where relevant, whether the applicant meets the qualitative selection requirements referred to in 5.2.4.

Admission process

Applicants as referred to in Article 5.2.1.b and Article 5.2.2 are requested to provide the Board of Admissions with:

- copies of diploma(s) and transcript(s);
- proof of language proficiency (if applicable, see 5.2.3);
- a filled-in 'Questionnaire Master Application' demonstrating that the candidate 1) has gained knowledge, understanding and skills in the field (of the specialisation) of the MA programme (with specific reference to the relevant courses taken and ECTS gained in the field of American history/literature) and 2) has acquired general academic skills as listed in Appendix B of the Faculty section of these regulations.
- For students with a non-Dutch BA diploma: an overview of the (online) course descriptions of completed courses in the field of North-American Studies during their undergraduate/graduate studies, including the level of the course and amount of credits.

The admission process may include an interview with the Board of Admissions, should this be necessary to clarify whether the applicant has the same level of knowledge, understanding and skills as holders of a degree specified in 5.2.1.a.
For further information on the admission procedure and required application documents please see https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/education/admission-and-application/masters.

5.2.3 **English and Dutch languages**

5.2.3.1 As further clarification of Article 2.8 concerning command of the language of instruction, a student who wishes to be admitted to an English-taught master's programme must have one of the following diplomas, or must meet the criteria of:

- an International Baccalaureate diploma from a programme taught in English (or an IB diploma with English A);

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- a diploma of secondary or higher education completed in Australia, Canada (with the exception of French-taught programmes in Canada), Ireland, Malta, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom, the United States of America or South-Africa;
- a diploma of an English-taught university degree programme completed at a Dutch research university;
- a diploma of an English-taught higher professional education (hbo) programme of four years at a Dutch university of applied sciences;
- a Dutch pre-university education (vwo) diploma.

5.2.3.2 If a student who wishes to be admitted does not meet the requirements in 5.2.3.1, the language level can be demonstrated with one of the following tests:

- English IELTS 6.5; where each separate component score must be at least 6.0;
- TOEFL (Internet based) 90, with at least 4.0 (new 1-6 scale as of 21 January 2026) or 20 (old 0-30 scale) for each separate component.;
- Cambridge English C2 Proficiency, or C1 Advanced with overall score 180, where each separate component score must be at least 169[3].

At the time when the student applies for the programme, the test must have been taken no more than two calendar years previously.

5.2.3.3 Not applicable.

5.2.3.4 Not applicable

For more information on language tests and diplomas which are sufficient with regard to the required command of English please see https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/education/admission-and-application/masters/admission-requirements#language-requirements.

5.2.4 Qualitative admission requirements

5.2.4.1 Not applicable

5.2.5 Maximum capacity

5.2.5.1 Not applicable.

Article 5.3 Deficiencies

See the faculty section.

Article 5.4 Pre-master's programmes and educational modules

5.4.1 The programme has established pre-master's programmes (for the following target groups) in order to remedy deficiencies. Pre-master's programmes/bridging programmes must be completed successfully within the prescribed period as specified in sub Article 5.2.1c.

This pre-master programme is intended for students who

- have earned the degree of bachelor at a university of applied sciences, equivalent to the level of a Dutch HBO bachelor's degree, and

[3] See also the English test score equivalency table of Leiden University

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- this degree is in History, English, European Studies, or Journalism

These students will have to complete a premaster programme of 60 EC, consisting of five courses (50 EC) and a Pre-master final assignment that is the equivalent of a bachelor's thesis (10 EC), including the faculty's Academic Skills Pre-master course in their first semester. Students who have successfully completed this premaster programme of 60 EC will be admitted to the Master's programme in North American Studies.

This premaster programme is also intended for students who

- have earned the degree of bachelor at a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic (WO) bachelor's degree in Humanities or Social Sciences, and
- do not meet the requirements as specified in 5.2.2.

These students will have to complete a premaster programme of 30 EC, consisting of the three courses offered in the semester in which they start the premaster programme. Students who have successfully completed this premaster programme of 30 EC will be admitted to the Master's programme in North American Studies.

Premaster programme, 60 EC:

Semester	Course name	Credits
I	The United States and the World: An Introduction to American Studies	5
I	Literature 5A: American Literature, 1917 to the present	10
I	Academic Skills, pre-master	5
I	History of the Global Environment	10
II	Pre-master Final Assignment North American Studies	10
II	Slavery and Memory in the Black Atlantic	10
	Students choose one or two of the following (10 EC total):	
II	Democracy in Action: Radical Cultures and Protest Movements in Modern America	10
II	Culture and Language: North America	5
II	History: North America	5
		60

Premaster programme, 30 EC:

Semester	Course name	Credits
I	Literature 5A: American Literature, 1917 to the present	10
I	History of the Global Environment	10
I	The United States and the World: An Introduction to American Studies	10
		30
II	Slavery and Memory in the Black Atlantic	10
II	Democracy in Action: Radical Cultures and Protest Movements in Modern America	10
II	History: North America*	5
II	Culture and Language: North America*	5
		30

*Depending on the amount of pre-master registrations, these courses may be replaced by an offered alternative.

5.4.2 Information regarding the pre-master programme can be requested from the study adviser of the programme.

5.4.3 The language requirements for a pre-master's programme are identical to the language requirements for the master's programme for which admission has been requested. These requirements must be met before the start of the premaster.

5.4.4. Educational modules: not applicable.

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5.4.5. Educational modules: not applicable.

Chapter 7 Evaluation of the programme

Article 7.1 **Evaluation of the programme**

The programme is evaluated as follows:

- course evaluations
- programme evaluation

The Programme Committee advises the Programme Board based on the outcomes of the evaluation.

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