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- Newsletter
- Calendar
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# UT AMS Distinguished Graduates: Denise Hunt

by American

Studies

**AMS :: ATX** is a blog dedicated to representing the many activities and interests of the department of American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. Together with the department's Twitter feed, this blog exists to serve the AMS and Austin communities by acting as a hub for up-to-date information on events and opportunities at UT and beyond.





*We are very pleased to announce that two American Studies Students were named as honorable mentions to the Dean's Distinguished Graduates list. Last week, we profiled one of those students. Today, we're featuring Denise Hunt.*

**AMS:ATX: When you came to UT, what did you think you would major in?**

Denise Hunt: I thought I was going to be an Advertising major because I had been a Digital Media major at the University of Houston previously.

**What was the first American Studies course you took at UT? What compelled you to take the course, and what do you remember about it?**

The first AMS course I took at UT was Cary Cordova's Intro to American Studies course. I took it because an advisor had suggested I check out the department as an alternative



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to Advertising. I just remember that everyday I learned something that either blew my mind or made me think “huh.” That’s when I knew AMS was the route for me.

### **How did you come to the decision to major in American Studies?**

I came to the decision to major in AMS after taking, and hating, my first Advertising class while loving my first AMS class.

### **What have been some of the stand-out courses for you in the American Studies department?**

Three of the greatest AMS courses I’ve taken have been Andrew Gansky’s Technology and the Body course, Lauren Gutterman’s Sexual Deviance in the 20th Century course, and Cary Cordova’s American Disasters course.

### **What are some of the most important intellectual questions that you’ve pursued during your time as an American Studies major?**

I’ve thought a lot about corporations vs non-profits and a lot about the proper way to acknowledge people’s lack of voices.

**Many people, I’m sure, have asked you, “what do you plan to do with this degree?” So: how do you plan to bring your training in American Studies out into the world? You could talk about career choices, but also the ways that American Studies has influenced other ways that you interact with US society and culture, and perhaps**

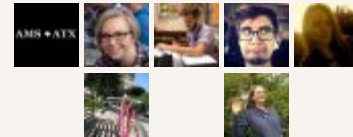
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## **other, non-professional goals of yours going forward.**

I plan to use my degree to go into work with Museums, which I think kind of covers a lot of this question. I want to use this work to explain history and cultures to people with more than just dates. I think it has also helped me from an activist stand point and really helped me see why I should stand-up for what I believe in.

## **You majored a second discipline besides American Studies. Given the “interdisciplinary” nature of American Studies, was this an easy fit, or was balancing two majors a big challenge?**

I majored in English, so I really never found any cross-listed classes between the two. At the same time, I used a lot of AMS style criticism and methodology in my English classes and papers.

## **Besides studying America and winning honors, what other activities have you gotten involved in at UT? Does studying culture academically shape the way that you participate in and understand other aspects of UT culture?**

I’m involved with a Latina-founded, multiculturally-grounded, service sorority called Kappa Delta Chi. I also have volunteered with the LBJ Museum and GENAustin. Studying culture helped give even more meaning to the community service I already loved participating in. I

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think it also helped me understand what being part of a community means. I put on a lot of culture-related events with my sorority and I think AMS really helped me be able to feel more involved with those.

**Finally, since you're the one with the honors degree in American Studies: what's the deal with America right now? In less than thirty words.**

Oh man, this is a loaded question. Honestly, I think America is a mess right now. I think we are failing greatly in our appreciation of others and in giving the oppressed their voices. I have hope, though. Adore and Endure each other!

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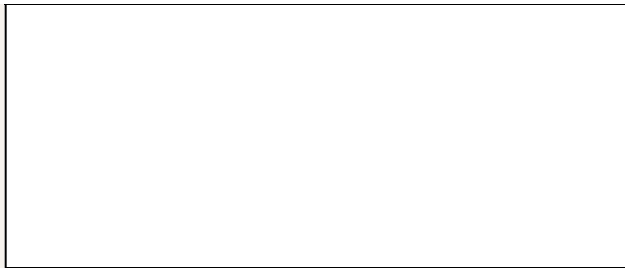
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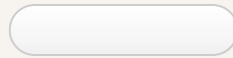
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