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John Carlos Rowe, a leading American Studies scholar, has examined his field of study and declared it not ready for the twenty-first century. In *The New American Studies*, Rowe demands a reinvention of the discipline that includes a commitment to making it more theoretically informed, and he draws on the work of cultural critics, postmodernist theorists, and scholars in ethnic, gender, gay, and media studies. Rowe asserts that with American Studies' strong history of social criticism and practical pedagogy it is an easy leap to the type of progressive commitments characteristic of these areas of scholarship.

The New American Studies is a compelling combination of theory and application, synthesis and polemic. Rowe traces the evolution of American Studies over the last quarter century and looks to the future, placing the field in a postnationalist context that encompasses all of the Americas and the disparate cultural zones within. He then demonstrates the kind of literary and cultural interpretation he calls for, examining subjects ranging from Hawthorne's and James's responses to nineteenth-century sexual mores, to the ways television legitimated itself in its first few decades, to the Elián González custody case.