

Introduction to American Studies

American Studies 201
California State University, Fullerton
Fall 2008
T/Th 2:30-3:45
HUM 326B

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:00-11:00; Thursday, 4:00-6:00; & by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces students to the field of American Studies through an interdisciplinary study of four distinct historical time periods. We will investigate the culture and society of each time period using a variety of approaches and sources. Our general aim is to acquire an increasingly complex understanding of how ideas, values, and experiences have united and divided diverse groups of Americans throughout history. More specifically, we will study how war, religion, childrearing, and globalization have shaped ideas about what constitutes America's "national" identity and its "common" culture. We will begin with an examination of 17th century colonial life, focusing on the Puritan roots of American exceptionalist thinking. Next we will turn our attention to the many spirited reform movements of the antebellum era and the influence of perfectionism on American culture. Then, we will study cultural conflict and change during the progressive era, paying particular attention to the role immigration played in transforming U.S. society at the turn of the century. Finally, we will situate the early Cold War in a global context, examining the relationship between exported American culture and the ideological practice of nationalism. Each unit and exam will revisit and elaborate upon major themes studied in previous units. The assigned reading will provide period-specific case studies and also model various American Studies approaches.

Required Texts

- Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*
- Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855 edition)
- Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*
- Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*

All books are available for purchase at Little Professor bookstore, 725 N. Placentia Ave (near the corner of Nutwood and Placentia).

Learning Goals

American Studies 201 meets General Education “American History, Institutions and Values” requirement (II.B.1). In line with CSUF’s “Goals of General Education,” this course will encourage students to:

- explore the historical development of American institutions and values and their impact on the individual and collective lives of Americans;
 - assess the ways in which the Constitution of the United States and government under the Constitution have shaped American democracy and contemporary American society;
 - explore the political culture of citizen participation in a democracy;
 - examine important cultural, intellectual, moral, and political struggles that have shaped contemporary American society; and
 - recognize the significance of the contributions of various ethnic and gender groups to American history, political institutions, and values within contexts of cultural accommodation and resistance.
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Course Assignments and Grading Standards

Three exams will be given: an in-class midterm; a take-home midterm; and an in-class final. See the course schedule below for dates. Exams will challenge you to “connect the dots” by placing reading materials, lectures, and discussions in critical conversation with one another. Exams will typically include short answer identification questions and one or more essay questions.

Midterm #1 and the final exam must both be completed in class, individually, and without the benefit of notes or books. Be sure to purchase blue exam booklets for these two tests. Midterm #2 must be completed individually outside of class (this means no collaboration); for Midterm #2 you may use your class notes and the assigned books. You will not need to consult additional sources. Midterm #2 must be typed; guidelines will be handed out in class. Additionally, you will have the option to revise and resubmit your essay(s) for Midterm #2 for a better grade.

Grading:

Midterm #1	20%
Midterm #2	40%
Final Exam	40%

For this course, +/- grading will be used. No extra credit work will be offered. Keep all graded exams so that any discrepancies can be easily and fairly straightened out. Make-up exams will be given only in the case of emergencies, as determined on a case-by-case basis.

A+ 97-99; A 94-96; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 60-63; F 0-59

Student Accommodations

CSUF complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing a process for disclosing disabilities and arranging for reasonable accommodations. On the CSUF campus, the Office of

Disabled Student Services has been delegated the authority to certify disabilities and to prescribe specific accommodations for students with documented disabilities. DSS provides support services for students with mobility limitations, learning disabilities, hearing or visual impairments, and other disabilities. Counselors are available to help students plan a CSUF experience to meet their individual needs. Prior to receiving this assistance, documentation from a qualified professional source must be submitted to DSS. For more information, please contact DSS in UH 101; phone 714-278-3117.

Academic Integrity

Integrity is an essential component of all students' academic experience. Students who violate university standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions, including failure in the course and suspension from the university. Since dishonesty in any form harms the individual, other students, and the university, policies on academic integrity are strictly enforced. I expect that you will familiarize yourself with the academic integrity guidelines found in the current student handbook. [<http://www.fullerton.edu/handbook/>]

Cheating is defined as obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent, or unauthorized means, or helping someone commit an act of academic dishonesty. (UPS 300.021). Examples include, but are not limited to:

Unacceptable examination behavior: communicating with fellow students, copying material from another student's exam or allowing another student to copy from an exam, possessing or using unauthorized materials, or any behavior that defeats the intent of an exam.

Plagiarism: taking the work of another and offering it as one's own without giving credit to that source, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.

Unauthorized collaboration on a project, homework or other assignment where an instructor expressly forbids such collaboration.

Documentary falsification, including forgery, altering of campus documents or records, tampering with grading procedures, fabricating lab assignments, or altering medical excuses.

American Studies at Fullerton

I am always happy to talk with students about the possibility of majoring, double majoring, or minoring in American Studies. Feel free to drop by my office hours or to schedule an appointment if you would like to learn more about the department or the discipline. For more information on the American Studies Department, visit our website: <http://hss.fullerton.edu/amst/>.

Course Schedule (subject to revision as necessary)

Date	Topic	Due
T, Aug. 26	Introduction to Course	
Th, Aug. 28	Course Keywords: Cultural Production, Reception, Context, Work	
Puritan Culture, 1620-1692		
T, Sep. 2	Migration and Mission	<i>Name</i> , "What's in a Name," Prologue, Ch. 1
Th, Sep. 4	Depravity and Declension	
T, Sep. 9	Contact and Conflict	<i>Name</i> , Chs. 2, 3, 4
Th, Sep. 11	The Puritan Legacy	
T, Sep. 16	War and National Identity	<i>Name</i> , Chs. 5, 6, 7, Epilogue
Th, Sep. 18	Midterm #1	
Antebellum Culture, 1800-1860		
T, Sep. 23	The Second Great Awakening	
Th, Sep. 25	Perfect Bodies and Communities	
T, Sep. 30	<i>Leaves of Grass</i> Discussion	<i>Leaves</i> , Preface
Th, Oct. 2	Separate Spheres	
T, Oct. 7	The Anti-Slavery Movement	
Th, Oct. 9	<i>Leaves of Grass</i> Discussion	<i>Leaves</i> , "Song of Myself"
T, Oct. 14	The Cultural Work of <i>Leaves of Grass</i>	<i>Leaves</i> , "I Sing the Body Electric"
Th, Oct. 16	Film Screening: Walt Whitman PBS Documentary	
Progressive Culture, 1890-1920		
T, Oct. 21	Progressive Reform Movements	Midterm #2 due
Th, Oct. 23	"A Right to Childhood"	<i>Orphan</i> , to p. 44
T, Oct. 28	The American West	<i>Orphan</i> , to p. 118
Th, Oct. 30	Science and Pseudo-Science	<i>Orphan</i> , to p. 159
T, Nov. 4	Family and Race	<i>Orphan</i> , to p. 254
Th, Nov. 6	Immigration and National Identity	<i>Orphan</i> , to p. 318
Cold War Culture, 1945-1960		
T., Nov. 11	<i>NO CLASS - VETERANS DAY</i>	
Th, Nov. 13	Security and Insecurity	
T, Nov. 18	Consumerism and Democracy	
Th, Nov. 20	Civil Rights and Foreign Policy	<i>Satchmo</i> , Chs. 1 and 2
T, 25, Th, 27	<i>NO CLASS - FALL BREAK</i>	
T, Dec. 2	The Cultural Work of Jazz Ambassadors	<i>Satchmo</i> , Chs. 3 and 4
Th, Dec. 4	Mass Culture and its Discontents	
T, Dec. 9	Exporting American Culture	<i>Satchmo</i> , Ch. 5 and Epilogue
Th, Dec. 11	Conclusion of Course / Review for Final Exam	
Th, Dec. 18	FINAL EXAM , 2:30-4:20, our classroom	Final Exam