

American Studies 201
Introduction to American Studies
Spring 2009

“America has been informed more by fables of its past
than by intimate communion with its actual past.”

--Gene Wise

Instructor: Dr. Carrie Lane
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30-12:30; Thursdays 2:30-4:30pm
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Course Description:

Intended as an introduction both to the discipline of American Studies and to American history and culture, this course examines four moments in American history from the Colonial era to the present. In this course we explore how change occurs in American society—through new connections, armed conflict, subtle negotiations, cultural campaigns, and grassroots political activism. We begin by comparing conflicting versions of the story of Pocahontas in history texts, film, and popular culture. We then proceed to the slavemarkets of 19th century New Orleans, where slaveowners, traders, and slaves competed to shape each transaction to their advantage. Moving on to the Industrial Era, we explore the stockyards of Chicago and the experiences of the new immigrants employed there. In our final era we read a memoir of the 1970’s feminist movement, focusing on the goals, methods, and internal divisions of that grassroots campaign. Several kinds of documents—including primary and secondary sources, documentary and feature films, photographs, artwork, cartoons, and music—are used to illustrate the nature and advantages of an interdisciplinary approach to American culture. Active participation is encouraged, and students are expected to engage in careful reading of course texts and extensive writing.

Required Texts:

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (1999)
Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906)
Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* (1999)
Reading Packet (CopyCo)

Books for this course are available for purchase at Little Professor Book Center (725 N. Placentia). I do not require specific editions, so feel free to purchase used copies (check out **half.com** for inexpensive used books). The course packet is **absolutely mandatory** and is available at CopyCo (2438 E. Chapman). If you have any trouble getting the books or packet, let me know as soon as possible.

Course Requirements:

This course entails a combination of lecture and class discussion. I expect you to come to class having completed all assigned reading for that day and prepared with questions and comments for discussion. **The reading load for this class is heavy for a G.E. course. It is crucial that you stay on top of the reading in order to keep up in class. If you’re having trouble with a particular reading or topic, I’ll**

be happy to talk it through with you during class or office hours. I do not take attendance, but it is essential that you attend class consistently, as exams will cover material from readings, lectures, and discussions. You will receive a zero for any assignments or quizzes that you miss due to absence. If you miss a class, you should obtain class notes from one or more of your fellow students.

Exams: There will be one midterm and a final exam. The midterm will take place in class on Thursday, March 17th. The final exam will be held from 9:30-11:20am on May 21 for the 8:30am section and May 19 for the 10:00am section. Both exams will include identifications, short answer questions, and essays. Make-up exams will be offered only in the case of serious and documented extenuating circumstances.

Writing Assignments: In accordance with the G.E. writing requirement, you will complete and revise an independent writing assignment for this class. **You are required to write one short paper of approximately 3 pages, which you will then resubmit after revision.** Late assignments will result in an automatic reduction of one letter grade per day late. I am willing to grant extensions on assignments, but only when approached well in advance of the original deadline. **If you miss a class during which an assignment is given, it is your responsibility to contact me to get the details of the assignment.**

Quizzes: Quizzes on reading material will be conducted on a regular basis, sometimes with warning, sometimes without. **If you miss a quiz, your score for that quiz will be a zero.** Make-up quizzes will only be offered only in the case of serious and documented extenuating circumstances.

In grading your assignments and exams, I pay close attention to both substance and form (grammar, spelling, organization, and clarity of expression). In evaluating the substance of an essay, I will examine whether you have demonstrated a critical understanding of course materials **and** presented and substantiated a coherent thesis or argument.

All written assignments will be submitted in hard copy and through TurnItIn.com.

Grading Procedures:

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|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Quizzes | 10% |
| Document Analysis | 15% |
| Midterm | 35% |
| Final Exam (take-home & in-class) | 40% |

Unless you have my prior consent, students who fail to meet the established due dates will receive a zero on the assignment. There is no make up work in this class without a written documented excuse.

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| A 90-100% | C 70-79% | F 59% or lower |
| B 80-89% | D 60-69% | |

The +/- grading system will not be used; no extra credit will be offered. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for every unexcused day overdue. Keep all graded assignments so that any discrepancies can be easily and fairly straightened out. I reserve the right to add or modify assignments over the course of the semester.

Academic dishonesty includes such things cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism, and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. It usually involves an attempt by a student to show a possession of a level of knowledge or skill which he/she in fact does not possess. When you use information from

sources other than yourself, you must reference the source appropriately (literature citation, URL for web-derived material). **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated under any circumstances and will result in a failing grade on that exam/assignment, as well as possible removal from the course or suspension from the university.**

Students with special needs: Please inform me during the first week of classes about any disability or special needs you may have that may require specific arrangements related to attending class, carrying out assignments, or taking examinations. CSUF requires students with disabilities to register with the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), located in UH-101 and at 714-278-3112, in order to receive prescribed accommodations appropriate to their disability.

All students must maintain and regularly check an **active email address registered with Blackboard** throughout the semester, as I frequently communicate information through email.

General Education Learning Goals:

American Studies 201 meets the General Education “American History, Institutions and Values” requirement (II.B.1). In fulfilling this university’s “Goals of General Education,” this course will prepare students to: understand critically the historical development of American institutions and values and their impact on the individual and collective lives of Americans; assess critically how the Constitution of the United States and government under the Constitution have shaped American democracy and contemporary American society; and understand critically the political culture of citizen participation, including political parties, pressure groups, public opinion, and the electoral process.

American Studies at Fullerton

I am always happy to talk with you 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’d like to learn more about the department or the discipline of American Studies. **For more information on the American Studies Department, see: <http://hss.fullerton.edu/amst/>.**

MOST IMPORTANTLY:

If you have any trouble with this class, if you’re not getting the reading, if an assignment is unclear, if you’re unsure of or unhappy with your grade, **DO NOT HESITATE** to come talk to me. Come see me as soon as you have a question or problem; don’t wait until the end of the term! This is what I’m here for, and it is always a pleasure, never an inconvenience, to talk with you and to assist you in doing the best work you can do.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

| Date | Topic | Readings |
|--|--|--|
| 1/27 | Course Introduction Studying American Culture | None |
| PART I: POCAHONTAS: REPRESENTATIONS AND REALITIES (early 1600s) | | |
| 2/3 | First Contact | Primary Documents about Pocahontas [P] Townsend, <i>Pocahontas & the Powhatan Dilemma</i> [P] |
| 2/10 | Images of Pocahontas FILM CLIPS | Disney's <i>Pocahontas</i> Press Kit Powhatan Nation's Response to <i>Pocahontas</i> "The Pocahontas Perplex" [P] "Pocahontas as Traitor" [P] |
| 2/17 | Making Americans | "Vast Designs: How America Came of Age" [P] "Goodbye, Columbus" [P] "The Meaning of Fourth of July for the Negro" [P] |
| PART II: ANTEBELLUM SLAVE MARKETS (1800-1861) | | |
| 2/24 | North American Slavery | <i>Soul by Soul</i> , Intro & Chapters 1-2 |
| 3/3 | Weapons of the Weak | <i>Soul by Soul</i> , Chapters 3-5 |
| 3/10 | The Meaning of Freedom | <i>Soul by Soul</i> , Chapters 6-7, Epilogue Letters by formerly enslaved persons [P] |
| MIDTERM | | |
| 3/17 | PAPER DUE; REVIEW SESSION | |
| 3/19 | IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM | |
| PART III: INDUSTRIALIZATION & THE PROGRESSIVE ERA (1900-1920) | | |
| 3/24 | Urbanization & Industrialization | Sinclair, Intro. & Ch. 1-11 "Uppie Redux?" [P] |
| 4/7 | Immigration, Ethnicity, & Race | Sinclair, Ch. 12-22 |
| 4/14 | Labor Agitation | Sinclair, Ch. 26-End |

