

**American Studies 201**  
**Introduction to American Studies**

Mathew Haskins  
Office: EC 622  
Office Hours: T-TH 11:45-12:45  
Campus Phone: (714) 278-2441  
email: mathew.haskins@cgu.edu

Readings:

Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years; Dedham Massachusetts, 1636-1736*

Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Ladies: A Study of Middle-Class Culture*

Jim Cullen, *The Art of Democracy: A Concise History of Popular Culture in the United States*

All books are required. Books can be purchased at the Little Professor Book Shop located at 725 N. Placentia, between Nutwood and Chapman in the Fullerton Plaza Center. Their phone number is (714) 996-3133.

The Nature of the Course:

In this course we will trace the development of various aspects of American civilization from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The course is divided into four major units, each of which examines the development of a specific American historical culture. The four historical cultures that we will examine are Puritanism (1600-1750), the Enlightenment (1750-1820), Victorianism (1820-1900), and Popular Culture (1865 to the present).

Learning Goals:

American Studies 201 meets General Education "American History, Institutions and Values" requirement (II.B.1). In line with this university's "Goals of General Education," this course will: 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.

### Course Requirements and Grading:

Your grade will consist of a mid-term and a final exam. Each test will constitute 50% of your final grade. Your **mid-term** exam will be on **October 12**. Your **final** exam will be on **December 12**, from **12:00** to **1:50**. Arrangements may be made for make-up exams if there is reasonable justification and the prior consent of the instructor. My grading criteria for exams are as follows: depth of understanding of course materials, use of evidence, clarity of expression, specificity, and organization of ideas. I may also on occasion make some brief written assignments, requiring as little as a paragraph or two. While these assignments will not be graded, your participation will be recorded and may be determining if you fall between two grades at the end of the course. For example, a student who is on the borderline between an "A" and "B" at the end of the course will be given the "A" if she/he has completed the written assignments. Attendance will not directly affect your grade but being in class regularly will be essential if you expect to be successful in this course. Finally, while no one in the class will be downgraded for lack of participation, thoughtful contributions to class discussion will be rewarded.

### Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments:

Aug 22      Class Introduction and a Discuss of the Concept of Culture

#### Unit I: Puritanism

Aug 24      "A City On A Hill": The Establish of Dedham, Massachusetts  
(Reading: Lockridge, xi-22)

Aug 29      The Church, Faith and Covenants  
(Reading: Lockridge, 23-36)

Aug 31      Communal Politics: The Issues of Authority and Freedom  
(Reading: Lockridge, 37-56)

Sep 5        Social Life and Leisure  
(Reading: Lockridge, 57-78)

Sep 7        Declining Utopianism: New Generations and New Communities  
(Reading: Lockridge, 79-118)

Sep 12      A New Society: The Stirrings of Democracy and Individualism  
(Reading: Lockridge, 119-164)

Sep 14      The Puritans and the American Experience  
(Reading: Lockridge, 165-180)

## Unit II: Enlightenment

- Sep 19      The Enlightenment and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*  
(Reading: Franklin, 1-24)
- Sep 21      Fact and Fiction: *The Autobiography* as Literary Work  
(Reading: Franklin, 27-32)
- Sep 26      The Education of Benjamin Franklin  
(Reading: Franklin, 32-65)
- Sep 28      Reason and Moral Perfection in the *Autobiography*  
(Reading: Franklin, 65-98)
- Oct 3        Science in the Age of Franklin  
(Reading: Franklin, 98-126)
- Oct 5        Liberalism, Republicanism and the American Revolution  
(Reading: Franklin, 126-160)
- Oct 10      The Reception and Legacy of the *Autobiography*  
(Reading: Hand-out, "Selected Reviews of the *Autobiography*")
- Oct 12      **Mid-term Exam**

## Unit III: Victorianism

- Oct 17      Industrialization, Urbanization, and the Rise of Jacksonian America  
(Reading: Halttunen, *xiii*-32)
- Oct 19      Hypocrisy, Sincerity and the Threat of the Confidence Man  
(Reading: Halttunen, 33-55)
- Oct 24      The Transparency of Fashion  
(Reading: Halttunen, 55-91)
- Oct 26      Etiquette: The Genteel Performance  
(Reading: Halttunen, 92-123)
- Oct 31      Mourning the Dead  
(Reading: Halttunen, 124-152)
- Nov 2        Unintended Consequences: The Contradictions and Decline of Sentimental Culture  
(Reading: Halttunen, 153-197)

## Unit IV: Popular Culture

- Nov 7      A Discussion of the Nature of Popular Culture and Its Emergence During the Antebellum Era  
(Reading: Cullen, 42-90)
- Nov 9      African Americans and Popular Culture  
(Reading: Cullen, 92-111)
- Nov 14     Dance Halls, Theaters, and Amusement Parks: Public Space and Popular Culture  
(Reading: Cullen, 111-134)
- Nov 16     Film Culture: Gender, Censorship, and the Rise of Hollywood  
(Reading: Cullen, 136-164)
- Nov 21     No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov 23     No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov 28     The Evolution of Jazz: From Lowbrow to Highbrow  
(Reading: Cullen, 164-194)
- Nov 30     Television and the "Great Debate" over Mass Culture during the 1950s  
(Reading: Cullen, 196-233)
- Dec 5      Rock 'n Roll and the Ascent of Youth Culture  
(Reading: Cullen, 234-255)
- Dec 7      The Internet: Corporate Profits and Democratic Possibilities  
(Reading: Cullen, 258-280)
- Dec 12     **Final**