

AMST 201 - Introduction to American Studies  
Spring 2005  
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Spring 2005 Office Hours: MWF 8:15-8:45; 11:00-11:45; 1:00-3:00 & by  
appointment

#### AMST 201 COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to AMST 201! Through a variety of texts (including an economic history, an intellectual history, a semi-fictional account of immigration to 1900-era Chicago, and a cultural history of war toys and films), studies of photographs, paintings, maps, and folk songs, plus clips from various films, we will examine four major topics in American history and culture:

- \* the development of slavery in 1600s colonial Virginia (what became the American "South"), with thematic focus on land & power, free labor & racism

- \* levels of independence created during the 1770s American Revolution, with thematic focus on liberty & tyranny, ethnic vs. national identity/patriotism, and "big" vs. "little" government

- \* the effects of 1880s-1910s industrialization, mass immigration, and urbanization, with thematic focus on workers' rights, activism, and government regulation of capitalist industry

- \* war toys, consumerism, movie & TV entertainment, Cold War militarism, and globalization from the 1940s to the present (including 9-11), with thematic focus on nationalism/patriotism, and conformity vs. dissent

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WHAT IS / ARE "AMERICAN STUDIES"?

Like history, anthropology & sociology, American Studies (AMST) seeks to examine the human experience in different times & places to (hopefully) learn valuable things about ourselves and others.

In a practical sense, we look for lessons from the past to guide us in the present & future, though past experience may not easily be an exact model for action today. We all do, however, practice lessons from the past throughout our daily lives -- for instance, when we tell stories about the past to others (and ourselves), we weave in meaning (moral & practical lessons about how to act, behave & think) as we tell the story; medical doctors also diagnose a patient's past in an attempt to give a prognosis (future prediction) about the patient's health.

In this course, you will begin to develop valuable skills which will not be limited to American Studies, but which you can apply to many areas of life. Foremost of these skills is "critical analysis" -- going beyond the ability to define something, to be able to assess the value of an event or concept; it's an interpretation of facts, a type of judgment, if you will, like in a court of law. You can answer the

question, "Was XX a good president or bad president," for instance, in various ways, depending on the evidence you raise to support your interpretation. Analysts carefully study, assess and determine factors -- in the case of AMST, factors which cause cultural, political, social, economic, gender/sexuality and religious change in a given society. We examine written documents, visual evidence, material culture, economic data, and a range of other materials. We may train as a specialist in a narrow, specific field/subfield, but we also can extrapolate our research into the field at large, as well-trained analysts. We practice explaining our findings & interpretations in well-written, concise presentations. As you can see, these skills can translate to almost any discipline.

To paraphrase James Sheehan, President of the American Historical Association (AHA), as he stated in the January 2005 issue of the AHA's magazine, Perspectives, we as professional analysts pledge a strict adherence to research methods that are public, transparent and open to critical scrutiny; a commitment to examining as much of the relevant evidence as possible, even if this threatens our own interpretations; a critical approach to all sources, especially to those that seem to confirm conventional wisdom; self-discipline in overcoming our own personal biases; and the resolute refusal to believe something merely because we wish it to be true.

Since AMST 201 is a GE course, in which an overview of "U.S. History, Institutions & Values" is mandated by the University, this particular AMST course may appear more like a US History course covering the American Revolution & Constitution, etc. Higher-level AMST courses examine in greater detail the various topics that 201 only touches upon in its 400-year sprint through American culture & history. Hopefully 201 will whet your appetite for the plethora of AMST courses offered at CSUF, and/or stimulate your continuing, greater interest in the world we live in, especially here in modern America. We're always students, in a sense (even professors), so give yourself the gift of never ceasing to learn. Dig in!

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Your attendance at lecture/discussion and your completion of the assigned readings (BEFORE each class session) is crucial to your success in this course, since your grade is based on the following:

\* Midterm Exam (40% of course grade; given at the end of Week 6, based on lectures corresponding to the Morgan & Wood books)

\* Short, take-home, written assignment on a given topic (20% of grade; typed, paper copy due in class, with electronic copy submitted to Turnitin.com). Note: this essay fulfills the University's requirement for all courses to include a written assignment that fulfills the General Education learning goal to have you "involve the organization and expression of complex data or ideas" which instructors can evaluate and offer suggestions for improving your writing; I'll be grading this portion, therefore, on both content (i.e., how well you answer the question) and on writing style (even though this isn't a composition

course, you still need to learn how to express your ideas in Standard Written English).

\* Final Exam (40% of course grade; non-cumulative, based on lectures corresponding to the Sinclair & Englehardt books) consisting of an in-class, written test culled from a pre-distributed list of study questions & terms (see elsewhere on Blackboard website). Improvement between the midterm and final exams will be taken into account, in the case of a borderline course grade.

A grade of C or better is required to satisfy the GE requirement this course can fulfill. Grades are earned on a percentage basis, without a curve, including plusses & minuses, on a 100-point scale:

90.00 - 93.25 = A-;      93.50 - 96.50 = A;      96.75 - 100.00 = A+  
80.00 - 83.25 = B-;      83.50 - 86.50 = B;      86.75 - 89.75 = B+  
70.00 - 73.25 = C-;      73.50 - 76.50 = C;      76.75 - 79.75 = C+  
60.25 - 63.25 = D-;      63.50 - 66.50 = D;      66.75 - 69.75 = D+  
60 = F (no answer given, on test taken)

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TEXTS:

Kenneth Morgan, Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History (2001; New York: N.Y.U. Press, 2001)

Gordon S. Wood, The American Revolution: A History (2002; New York: Random House/Modern Library, 2003)

Upton Sinclair, The Jungle (1905; New York: Bantam, 1981 -- NOTE: any edition will do; this one [cheapest paperback currently being published] has been ordered for this course)

Tom Englehardt, The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation (1995; New York: Basic Books/Harper Collins, 1998)

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LEARNING GOALS:

American Studies 201 meets Cal State Fullerton's General Education "American History, Institutions and Values" requirement (II.B.1). In line with the university's "Goals of General Education," this course seeks to accomplish the following four goals:

\* to explore the historical development of American institutions and values and their impact on the individual and collective lives of Americans;

- \* to assess the ways in which the Constitution of the United States and government under the Constitution have shaped American democracy and contemporary American society;
- \* to 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
- \* to recognize the significance of the contributions of various ethnic and gender groups to American history, political institutions, and values within contexts of cultural accomodation and resistance.

AS 201 also fulfills the University's General Education revised writing requirement as per UPS 411.201.

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GENERAL CLASS POLICIES:

- \* Turn off cell phones & beepers during class; please omit needless "chatter."
- \* Complete the assigned readings by the start of each class session; this is essential, since you will be tested on material from both class sessions & the readings.
- \* Plagiarism/cheating on exams or assignments will be treated as automatic failure for the course, and offenders will be reported to the University for their possible disciplinary action.
- \* Students who qualify for accommodation of any disability may make an appointment at Disabled Student Services (DSS) to arrange an alternate venue for tests.
- \* Your opinions are welcome and encouraged, within the limits of time and respectful citizenry -- i.e., when if expressed in a way that respects (does not denigrate or show hostility toward) other students' gender, ethnicity/race, nationality, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, and/or disability.

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SYLLABUS:

WEEK 1: CULTURE AS A UNIFYING CONCEPT

Monday, Jan. 31st -- Introduction to the course; historical/cultural analysis & interpretation

Wednesday, Feb. 2nd -- European exploration of the Americas; Two different worlds: British colonies in Virginia and Massachusetts ==  
READING: Morgan, Slavery and Servitude, bottom of page 26 to top of page 29

Friday, Feb. 4th -- Who came to the New World and why? Early English Immigration to the North American colonies (early- to mid-1600s) ==  
READING: Morgan, pp. 8-24 == FILM CLIPS: Far And Away (1992)

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WEEK 2: RACIAL, CLASS & CULTURAL HIERARCHIES IN COLONIAL AMERICA

Monday, Feb. 7th -- Mercantilism, cash crops and the demand for labor (mid- to late-1600s) === READING: Morgan, 44-64

Wed., Feb. 9th -- The "Glorious Revolution" of 1689 enables transition from indentured servitude to slavery (late 1600s - early 1700s) === READING: Morgan, 29-42, 66-84

Friday, Feb. 11th -- The "Culture" of Slavery: Resistance vs. Rebellion, and Acculturation vs. Forced Assimilation === READING: Morgan, 86-108 === FILM CLIPS: Amistad (1996)

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WEEK 3: RACIAL MYTHOLOGY; 1st MIDTERM REVIEW

Monday, Feb. 14th -- Blacks in the American Revolution; myths of black inferiority as post-facto rationale for slavery (1700s-1800s) === READING: Morgan, 120-26

Wed., Feb. 16th -- review of Morgan book for midterm; see "Study List" folder under "Outlines & reading lists" tab on Blackboard

Friday, Feb. 18th -- The French & Indian War (1754-63) === READING: Wood, 3-24, 91-106 === FILM CLIPS: Last of the Mohicans (1992)

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WEEK 4: CHALLENGES TO THE OLD SYSTEM: COLONIAL BRITISH RULE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Monday, Feb. 21st -- no classes = Presidents' Day Holiday

Wed., Feb. 23rd -- Post-War Crises (1763-75) === READING: Wood, 27-44

Friday, Feb. 25th -- Making the break: the "Common Sense" of Independence (1774-76) === READING: Wood, 47-62, 65-70

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WEEK 5: CHALLENGES OF THE NEW SYSTEM

Monday, Feb. 28th -- Securing Independence: the Revolutionary War (1775-81) === READING: Wood, 74-88, 113-17 === FILM CLIPS: Revolution (1985)

Wed., Mar. 2nd -- Mythologies of "Big" vs. "Little" Government, Part 1: The Articles of Confederation (1781-89) as fearful reaction against federal/national gov't tyranny === READING: Wood, 70-74, 106-09, 139-50

Friday, Mar. 4th -- Mythologies of "Big" vs. "Little" Government, Part 2: The Constitution as counterbalance to state gov't tyranny ==  
READING: Wood, 126-29, 151-66

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WEEK 6: POLITICAL DEMOCRACY -- NEW DILEMMAS; 2nd REVIEW for  
MIDTERM; MIDTERM EXAM

Monday, Mar. 7th -- Mythologies of "Big" vs. "Little" Government, Part 3: The Bill of Rights as counterbalance to federal gov't tyranny

Wed., Mar. 9th -- review of Wood book for midterm; see "Study List" folder under "Outlines & reading lists" tab

Friday, Mar. 11th -- MIDTERM EXAM (in class -- bring your own blue book[s] & pens)

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WEEK 7: WESTWARD EXPANSION, CIVIL WAR & "AMERICAN VALUES"

Monday, Mar. 14th -- Continental & Imperial Expansion of the U.S., 1800s == FILM CLIP: Moby Dick (2002)

Wed., Mar. 16th -- Civil War (1861-65), Indian Wars (1833-90), and Segregation (1880s-1960s)

Friday, Mar. 18th -- Discussion of article, "American Values" (1982) == READING: see "Assignments" tab for text; essay assigned

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WEEK 8: FEEDING INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM

Monday, Mar. 21st -- The "Second Wave" of Immigration to U.S. (1880s-1910s) == READING: Upton Sinclair, The Jungle, chapters 1-5

Wed., Mar. 23rd -- Growth of cities & industry (late 1800s - early 1900s) == READING: Sinclair, chs. 7-14

Friday, Mar. 25th -- midterms returned and reviewed (as final-exam preparation)

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SPRING BREAK = March 26th - April 3rd

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WEEK 9: CHALLENGES TO THE CAPITALIST-INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM

Monday, Apr. 4th -- Challenges to the Industrial Order: Populism & Progressivism (1890s-1910s) == READING: Sinclair, chs. 18-23

Wed., Apr. 6th -- Radical challenge to the Industrial-Capitalist Order: Socialism (1901-17) == READING: Sinclair, chs. 25-29

Friday, Apr. 8th -- The First World War and the decline of  
Progressivism & Socialism (1910s-20s) === READING: Sinclair, chs. 30-  
31

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WEEK 10: WORKERS & GOVERNMENT RESPOND TO ECONOMIC CRISIS; 1st  
FINAL-EXAM REVIEW

\*\* ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE (2- to 3-page think-piece on "American Values"  
-- typed, paper copy due at beginning of class) Monday, Apr. 11th --  
The Great Depression and the "New Deal" (1930s): the answer to  
workers' problems? [no assigned reading for today]

Wednesday, Apr. 13th -- Hollywood images of labor and the Great  
Depression === FILM CLIPS: Modern Times (1936) === READING: finish  
the Sinclair book (if you haven't already!)

Friday, Apr. 15th -- review of Sinclair book for final exam; see  
"Study List" folder under "Outlines & reading lists" tab

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WEEK 11: INTRODUCTION TO A CENTURY OF WAR

Monday, Apr. 18th -- The Second World War: Racism and the "Good War"  
(1939-45) === FILM CLIPS: Why We Fight (1943) === READING: Tom  
Englehardt, The End of Victory Culture, pp. 3-top8, 44-mid52

Wednesday, Apr. 20th -- the beginning of the Cold War overseas (1945-  
49) === READING: Englehardt, bottom of 91 - top96

Friday, Apr. 22nd -- Atom Spies, McCarthyism & the "National-Security  
State": the Cold War at home (late-1940s - mid-1950s) === READING:  
Englehardt, 96-100, 113-32 === FILM CLIPS: Manchurian Candidate (1963)

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WEEK 12: COLD WAR CULTURE -- FEARS, PARANOIA & BATTLES

Monday, Apr. 25th -- Living in the Nuclear Age (1945+) === READING:  
Englehardt, 101-07, 155-58 === FILM CLIPS: Atomic Cafe (1982)

Wed., Apr. 27th -- Korean War: Victory neither gained nor lost?  
=== READING: Englehardt, 54-65, bottom of 74 - 81 === FILM CLIPS:  
documentary on atomic warfare

Friday, Apr. 29th -- The "Western" in American Culture: 1950s Cold War  
themes fought in film & on TV === READING: Englehardt, 37-top44

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WEEK 13: DOMESTIC CHANGES & OVERSEAS IMPERIALISM

Monday, May 2nd -- Birth of Rock & Roll: non-political youth dissent or "juvenile delinquency"?  
=== READING: Englehardt, 133-49

Wed., May 4th -- 100 years late: Civil Rights for African-Americans (1955-1970s) === READING: Englehardt, 90-bottom91, 107-12, 166-71

Friday, May 6th -- Beginning of the Vietnam War (1964-67): the height of American idealism === READING: Englehardt, top10-mid11, 159-65, 175-80, 187-201 === FILM CLIPS: documentary on President Johnson ("L.B.J.")

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WEEK 14: COLD WAR CULTURE: FROM THE ASHES TO RECOVERY?

Monday, May 9th -- End of the Vietnam War (1968-75): the defeat of American idealism === READING: Englehardt, mid11-15, 215-54 === FILM CLIPS: Letters from America (1988)

Wed., May 11th -- Phoenix? Fighting a national "Vietnam Syndrome" from Star Wars the movie (1977) to the Vietnam Memorial (1982) to "Star Wars" the missile system (1983) === READING: Englehardt, 254-85 === FILM CLIPS: Star Wars (1977)

Friday, May 13th -- "Victory Culture" recovered? The end of the Cold War (1989-90) and the Persian Gulf War (1990-91) === READING: Englehardt, 285-303 === FILM CLIPS: documentary on Gulf War & media coverage

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WEEK 15: POST-COLD-WAR VICTORY-CULTURE REBIRTH? TOWARDS A "POST-MODERN" AMERICAN CULTURE?

Monday, May 16th -- 9/11 and US response in Afghanistan (2001-02) === READING: finish Englehardt readings (if you haven't already!)

Wed., May 18th -- US presses the "War on Terrorism" into Iraq (2003+); retrospective on "victory culture"

Friday, May 20th -- review of Englehardt book for final exam; see "Study List" folder under "Outlines & reading lists" tab

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FINAL EXAM (same classroom, see date/time below):  
9 a.m. section (10149) = Wed. May 25th, 9:30-11:20 a.m.  
10 a.m. section (10150) = Fri. May 27th, 9:30-11:20 a.m.  
noon section (10151) = Fri. May 27th, noon-1:50 p.m.

FINAL-EXAM & COURSE GRADES AVAILABLE via e-mail on or after Fri. June 3rd, 2005: send an e-mail request to rbaxter@fullerton.edu after May 27th.