

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN STUDIES

AMST 201
Section 16: TR 1:00
UH-250
Wayne Hobson

Spring 2009
Office Hours (UH-415): Tuesdays 2:30-4:30
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Required Texts: (books available at **Little Professor Book Center**, 725 Placentia Ave., Fullerton)

Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*

Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (rev. ed. , 2008)

Elizabeth Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*

Puritan New England essays available at course BlackBoard site

About the course:

This is an historical examination of changing American cultural patterns in four pivotal time periods from colonial times to the present.

Our class sessions will combine lecture and discussion. Become an active student; take notes as you read, raise questions in class, and formulate your own interpretations and analyses of each topic. There is a **Blackboard site** for this class. Visit it regularly for announcements and useful course materials. For example, you will find helpful study guides at the Blackboard site. Also, the Turnitin essay assignments will be detailed at the Blackboard site.

We will be examining American culture at four different time periods, arranged chronologically from the 17th century to the present. Our first topic will explore efforts by Puritan settlers in 17th century New England to create communities based on hierarchy, order, and the approval of God. Their communities prospered, but the Puritans found themselves beset by petty rivalries and growing insecurities. Witchcraft accusations were one response to these tensions and worries. Usually such accusations were sporadic and only occasionally led to fateful convictions. However, near the end of the century, in 1692, Puritans experienced a heightened sense of insecurity and succumbed to a yearlong period of witch hunting, trials, and executions that was unprecedented in their history.

Our second topic will explore the changing places of European Americans and African Americans in the 19th century South--during the slavery era and the early freedom era. The central question at the end of the American Civil War was what was to be the place of African Americans in the new order of things? As we shall see, black Americans played an active role in defining their new place. But, their ideas and plans were often contested.

Our third topic will explore the lives, hopes, experiences, and sense of identity of several major groups of immigrants to America, and their descendents, from the mid- nineteenth-century to the present. Ronald Takaki will be our guide through the experiences of white ethnics (Irish and Jewish migrants), Mexican migrants, and Asian migrants from China and Japan before World War II as well as other Asian migrants after World War II. We will also consider whether World War II and its aftermath fundamentally changed the cultural assumptions and boundaries affecting multicultural America.

Our fourth topic considers the immediate present and future. We will examine the culture, politics, and science of a worldwide phenomenon that is going to play an increasingly important role in your adult lives: global warming. We will explore this looming catastrophe both in its worldwide scale and in its meaning and impact in specific communities—and ask the inevitable question: Why didn't we recognize this threat in a timely manner and why are we still not really responding to it?

General Education Learning Goals for Introduction to American Studies:

This course satisfies the CSUF General Education requirement II.B.1 (American History, Institutions & Values). The learning goals for this section of the GE program include recognizing the significance of important cultural, intellectual, moral, and political struggles that have shaped contemporary American society and recognizing 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.

Examinations & Assignments:

There will be **two midterm examinations and a final examination**. All three exams will be essay exams, requiring at least one longer comprehensive essay and several shorter more specific essays. These three exams together will be 65% of your final course grade.

In addition, you will write three short out-of-class essays which you will submit via Turnitin at the course BlackBoard site. These essays together will be 25% of your final course grade. The first essay, on Puritan culture, is worth 5% and is required. You will have a choice for your other two essays, each of which will be worth 10%. Three essays will be assigned (one for each of sections two, three, and four of the course), but you are only required to write two of them—you choose which two. If you wish, you may write all three and take your two best grades. Details on these assignments are available at the course BlackBoard site.

Regular attendance is required and I will take roll from time to time. To encourage your attendance and preparation, and also to reward it, I will give **at least one short quiz during each section** of the course. These quizzes may be in the form of “pop” quizzes or they may be announced ahead of time. They will be based entirely on the reading assignment for that week. They will be factored into your class participation grade. There will be no makeup quizzes.

My primary mode of instruction is structured discussion although occasionally I will lecture. Your active participation is crucial to the success of this course. I expect you to keep up with the reading and to be prepared to participate. From time to time I will randomly call on students, although most of the time I will wait for you to volunteer ideas, questions, or information. **Helpful class participation can significantly improve your grade.** Attendance, participation, and the quizzes together will count for 10% of your final course grade.

Course Policies

Since the Turnitin essays will be written out of class, it is vital that you familiarize yourself with the rules and rationale concerning **plagiarism**. We will devote some time in class to this topic. Plagiarism is defined as the act of taking the work of another and offering it as one's own without giving credit to that source. When sources are used in a paper, acknowledgment of the original author or source must be made through appropriate references. If you have any questions about what should be documented and how

you should document, please ask me. Plagiarized work will receive an F for the assignment and be reported to the campus Judicial Affairs Officer.

We will use the +/- grading scale, particularly for borderline cases. Makeup exams are available only for students who contact me before the exam date to explain their circumstances. An Incomplete ("I" grade) will be given only after consultation with the instructor and must include an explanation of the reason for the request. Normally, a 10-point penalty will be assessed for assignments completed after the end of the semester.

Assessment	Percent of Final Grade	Grading Scale
Midterm exams	40% (20% each)	A- 90-91; A 92-100
Final exam	25%	B- 80-81; B 82-87; B+ 88-89
Turnitin essays	25%	C- 65-66; C 67-77; C+ 78-79
Attendance & Participation	10%	D- 50-51; D 52-62; D+ 63-64

Lecture-Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments:

INTRODUCTION

Jan. 27 Introduction to American Cultural Studies

I. COMMUNITY AND CRISIS IN PURITAN NEW ENGLAND (17th Century)

- Jan. 29 City Upon a Hill: The Puritan Sense of Mission
 Alan Taylor, "New England 1600-1700," pages 1-5 (available at BlackBoard)
 John Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity* (available at BlackBoard)
Turnitin essay #1 due by noon, Thursday, Jan. 29
- Feb. 3 The Covenanted Community & A Case Study of Gossip, Slander, and a Failed Witchcraft
 Feb. 5 Accusation
 Kenneth Lockridge, "The Policies of Perfection: The Town" in (available at BlackBoard)
 John Demos, "Introduction;" "Hard Thoughts & Jealousies" (available at BlackBoard)
- Feb. 10 Puritan Success & the Shock of Indian Warfare
 Feb. 12 Alan Taylor, "New England 1600-1700," pages 5-12 (available at BlackBoard)
 Jill Lepore, "Habitations of Cruelty" (available at BlackBoard)
- Feb. 17 Witch Hunt: The Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692
 Feb. 19 Maxine Hong Kingston, "The Village Crazy Lady" (available at BlackBoard)
 Richard Goodbeer, "The 1692 Witch Hunt" (available at BlackBoard)
 Carol Karlsen, "Brands Plucked Out of the Burning" (available at BlackBoard)
- Feb. 24 Review for midterm exam
 Feb. 26 Midterm Exam #1

II. RACE, POWER, AND CULTURE IN THE CIVIL WAR/RECONSTRUCTION ERA (19th Century)

- March 3 The World the Slaveholders Made & the World the Slaves Made
 March 5 Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 98-122
 Foner, *Forever Free*, 3-40
 Slave spirituals (CD played in class)
- March 10 Emancipation as a Civil War Issue; The Meanings of Freedom
 March 12 Foner, *Forever Free*, 41-106
 “Glory” (excerpt of film shown in class)
- March 17 The Post-War Options: Restore the Old World or Create a New One? Reconstruction,
 March 19 “Redemption,” and their Legacies
 Foner, *Forever Free*, 107-198
Turnitin essay #2 due by midnight, Sunday, March 22
- March 24 Legacy of Reconstruction
 Foner, *Forever Free*, 198-238
- March 26 Midterm Exam #2

SPRING BREAK

III. COMPARATIVE ETHNIC STUDIES: IRISH, CHINESE, JAPANESE, JEWISH, AND MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS IN INDUSTRIAL AMERICA (19th & 20th Century Experiences)

- April 7 Our Author’s Personal Story; Comparing Irish & Chinese Migration to 19th Century
 April 9 America
 Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 441-445, 131-154, 177-205
- April 14 Comparing Japanese and Jewish Migration to early 20th Century America
 April 16 Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 232-261, 262-291
- April 21 Mexican Americans and the Barrios of El Norte; World War II: American Dilemmas
 April 23 Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 292-310, 339-382
Turnitin essay #3 due by midnight, Sunday, April 19
- April 28 Beyond World War II: Multicultural America and Struggles Toward a New National
 April 30 Sense of Identity
 Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 383-441
 Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union,” his so-called “race speech,” delivered at
 Philadelphia 3/18/08 (avail. at BlackBoard—or view it on YouTube, be sure you get
 the full speech version, which is 37 minutes)

IV. THE FUTURE IS US (21st Century)

May 5 The Reality of Global Warming; Climate Models and the Deep Contingency of
May 7 Civilizations

 “An Inconvenient Truth” (video shown in class)

 Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*, 1-121

Turnitin essay #4 due by midnight, Sunday, May 10

May 12 Imagining Our Future: Living with Climate Change; Can We “Solve” the Problem? (And
May 14 Why Have We Been So Slow to Try?); Review for Final Exam

 Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*, 122-199

Final examination:

Tuesday, May 19 12:00noon-1:50pm