

American Studies Course Descriptions

Fall 2007

Revised: 8/31/07

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Note: All classes are held on the GW Main Campus (Foggy Bottom) unless otherwise noted. Check the GW Schedule of Classes website for specific locations and the most up-to-date information at <http://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/>

AMST 71.80 – Introduction to American Studies

Dr. Teresa Murphy

CRN 62152

WF 2:20-3:10

This course will examine how American culture has evolved since the first contact between Europeans and Indians. We will examine the inter-relationship between intellectual and economic change as well as the impact of ideas about race and gender on American social life. We will also consider the extent to which we should speak of a unified American culture or different American cultures. This course will use an interdisciplinary approach to study these issues, drawing on art, artifacts, literary texts, and historical documents. *Students must also register for one of the following discussion sections.*

AMST 71.30 – Discussion

CRN 62153

M 9:35-10:25

AMST 71.32 – Discussion

CRN 62157

M 12:45-1:35

AMST 71.31 – Discussion

CRN 62154

M 11:10-12:00

AMST 71.33 – Discussion

CRN 62158

M 2:20-3:10

AMST 71W.80 – Introduction to American Studies (WID)

Dr. Teresa Murphy

CRN 65497

WF 2:20-3:10

This course will examine how American culture has evolved since the first contact between Europeans and Indians. We will examine the inter-relationship between intellectual and economic change as well as the impact of ideas about race and gender on American social life. We will also consider the extent to which we should speak of a unified American culture or different American cultures. This course will use an interdisciplinary approach to study these issues, drawing on art, artifacts, literary texts, and historical documents. *Students must also register for one of the following discussion sections to satisfy the course and WID requirements.*

AMST 71W.31 – Discussion

CRN 65498

M 12:00-12:50

AMST 71W.33 – Discussion

CRN 66474

M 12:45-1:35

AMST 71W.32 – Discussion

CRN 66473

M 1:00-1:50

AMST 71W.34 – Discussion

CRN 66475

M 2:20-3:10

AMST 139W.80 – Women in the United States (WID)

Dr. Teresa Murphy

CRN 63840

WF 9:35-10:25

This course will examine the history of women in the United States from pre-Columbian settlement until Reconstruction. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which gender has been an important component in the construction of power relationships; the ways in which issues of race and class have affected the relationships among women; and the ways in which ideas about gender have evolved during the past several centuries. *Students must also register for one of the following discussion sections to satisfy the course and WID requirements.*

AMST 139W.81 – CANCELLED

CRN 66476

F 11:10-12:00

AMST 139W.84 – Discussion

CRN 65499

F 11:10-12:00

AMST 139W.82 – Discussion

CRN 65494

F 12:45-1:35

AMST 139W.85 – Discussion

CRN 65500

F 11:10-12:00

AMST 139W.83 – Discussion

CRN 65496

F 2:20-3:10

AMST 139W.86 – CANCELLED

CRN 66477

F 12:45-1:35

AMST 144.80 – Explorations in Historical Geography

Dr. Eric Lindstrom

CRN 64764

TR 5:10-6:15

Examination of selected themes in the cultural geography of the United States over the course of its history, in relation to an overview of the historical geography of the country.

AMST 145.80 – Folk Arts in America

Dr. John Vlach

CRN 66450

TR 12:45-2:00

This course will present an overview of folk art traditions within the United States. Examples will include works produced by a variety of ethnic and regional groups including Native Americans, African Americans, and Euro-Americans. Examples of blacksmithing, pottery, quilting, woodcarving, ceramics, and other genres will be surveyed. Lectures will be organized by artistic media. Several examples within each medium will be discussed to illustrate significant aspects of historical development, cultural variation, technical expertise, and/or creative innovation. Lectures will all be illustrated with slides (some films may be shown) and we may also have some visiting specialists give presentations.

AMST 167.10 – American Culture / CANCELLED

STAFF (TBD)

CRN 66310

AMST 167.11 – Cultural History / CANCELLED

CRN 66308

AMST 167.80 – Race & Ethnicity in US Postwar Cities

Dr. Suleiman Osman

CRN 64766

TR 2:20-3:35

This course will examine the history of race and ethnicity in postwar American cities. What have been the "great migrations" that have shaped the American city? How have the changing tensions between immigrants, African-Americans and their descendants shaped the political institutions, language of reform, racial ideology, ethnic identity, and built environment of the city? How has the evolving cityscape reshaped the relationship between African-Americans, "whites" and different waves of immigrants? The course will examine the history of cityscapes as varied as inner-city Detroit, suburban immigrant Los Angeles, and gentrifying Washington D.C.

AMST 167.81 – 20th Century US Immigration

Dr. Tom Guglielmo

CRN 66480

TR 11:10-12:00

This course will examine twentieth-century U.S. immigration by focusing on a series of related questions: America is a "land of immigrants," we are told, but what does this mean? Who are these immigrants? Where have they come from, why did they leave their homelands, and what were their migration processes like? How many returned home after a brief stint in the United States, how many stayed, and how many others traveled back and forth for years? For those immigrants who stayed, how were they treated when they got here—by neighbors, co-workers, employers, schoolmates, and the federal government? How did they respond to the new economic, political, and social challenges and opportunities of the United States? How have factors such as race, gender, class, and generation shaped their lives? How have immigrants changed the United States? How has the United States changed immigrants? How have the answers to these questions changed—or not changed—over time? *Students must also register for one of the following discussion sections.*

AMST 167.82 – Discussion

CRN 66481

R 12:45-1:35

AMST 167.84 – Discussion

CRN 66483

R 3:55-4:45

AMST 167.83 – Discussion

CRN 66482

R 2:20-3:10

AMST 167.85 – Discussion

CRN 66484

R 2:20-3:10

AMST 168W.10 – Cultural Criticism in America (WID)

Dr. Chad Heap

CRN 64288

TR 11:10-12:00

This seminar introduces students to major methods for understanding and interpreting cultural materials. We will explore how and why culture—particularly mass culture such as film, television, photography, music, fashion, and advertising—plays such a significant role in our lives. At various point in the semester, we will examine 1) the ways that we experience culture and ground our identities in it; 2) the ideological messages and stereotypes that circulate in cultural products; 3) the institutional, corporate and individual production of cultural products and spaces; and 4) the ways that different audiences interpret the culture they consume. This course is writing-intensive, discussion-oriented, and fulfills the WID requirement. *This course satisfies a WID requirement. Non-majors will be admitted only by permission of the instructor.*

AMST 171.80 – US Social History

Dr. James Horton

CRN 66490

MW 11:10-12:00

In classes that meet twice weekly, we focus on the lives of common working people in their struggle for survival and achievement from the earliest "pre-discovery" and "settlement" of North America to the Civil War. In this process we draw upon the latest historical research and theories, and we investigate some of the most recent and promising research techniques and methods. Students are encouraged to think like historians. This does not mean simply memorizing lists of dates and names. It means developing the ability to think critically, in historical and comparative perspective.

We are especially interested in the role of family, work, class, race, ethnicity, and gender as they helped to shape American society during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The growth of the institution of slavery and the contradiction it posed for the founding principles of American freedom, the development of racial theory used to justify the treatment of Native Americans and African Americans, and the significance of gender role formation, constitute the foundation of our intellectual inquiry into the social, political and economic structure of pre-Civil War America. Our central purpose is to investigate the historical roots and development of our contemporary ideas, problems, fears and dreams. In short, we hope to examine our collective ancestry and the origins of the things Americans now often think of as "common sense." Most of all, students will be exposed to some of the excitement and vitality of today's historical profession. *Students must also register for one of the following discussion sections.*

AMST 171.81 – Discussion

CRN 66491

W 12:45-1:35

AMST 171.83 – Discussion

CRN 66493

W 3:55-4:45

AMST 171.82 – Discussion

CRN 66492

W 2:20-3:10

AMST 171.84 – Discussion

CRN 66494

W 2:20-3:10

AMST 175.80 – American Architecture (1600-1860)

Dr. Richard Longstreth

CRN 63670

MW 12:45-2:00

This course examines selected aspects of the built environment in the United States from the first period of European settlement to the eve of the Civil War. Stylistic properties, functions, common patterns of design, technological developments, and urbanistic patterns are introduced as vehicles for interpreting the historical significance of this legacy of both exceptional and representative examples. Buildings are analyzed both as artifacts and as signifiers of broader social, cultural, and economic tendencies. Other topics introduced include the persistence and mixing of cultural traditions, the role of the designer, the influence of region, and architecture as a component of landscape.

Among the facets of the built environment that are examined are the multi-faceted nature of colonial building and settlement patterns; the emergence of national expression; the rise of city building and of a commercial core; the growing specificity of building types for commercial, governmental, institutional, and religious functions; the enduring importance of the single-family house; the multi-faceted nature of eclecticism; evolving views of nature and landscape design; and the impact of technology. *Graduate students can take the course and we will schedule a separate graduate discussion section.*

AMST 179.10 – Practicum in American Studies

Dr. Teresa Murphy

CRN 62159

T 9:10-11:00

This course is limited to, and required for, American Studies majors in their senior year. The course work is primarily an internship of approximately 8 hours a week in an organization or agency whose work is generally related to American Studies, U.S. culture or politics, or social issues. The internship must be approved at the beginning of the semester by the course instructor. In addition to the internship, students must attend class, which focuses on preparation for the spring senior research thesis. *Restricted to American Studies majors.*

AMST 195.10 – Independent Study

CRN 62160

AMST 198.10 – Research: Civil Rights - CANCELLED

CRN 64772

Restricted to American Studies majors only (Seniors & Juniors; Sophomores with permission).

AMST 198.11 – The Sixties

Prof. Dave Kieran

CRN 66307

MF 11:10-12:25

This course examines both the history of the 1960s and the enduring appeal of “the Sixties.” The 1960s was a period of enormous cultural importance for the US, and “the Sixties” remain a significant touchstone in contemporary culture and politics. Recognizing this, we will examine the historical moment roughly book-ended by John F. Kennedy’s inauguration and the end of the Vietnam War, the various memories of this period that have emerged, and the cultural and political purposes they have served over the past twenty-five years. We will pair texts produced during 1960-1975 with texts written after 1980 that take the period as its topic. We will attempt to answer the following questions: Are the 1960s and “the Sixties” the same thing, or is there a difference between them? When did “the Sixties” begin and end? Was the 1960s a decade of radical social change? What has been the legacy and impact of the 1960s on American culture? Why does “the Sixties” remain such a resonant site for cultural and political memory, and what is at stake in these memories? Our topics will include political culture, social movements, gender and sexuality, popular culture and mass media, and the Vietnam War.

AMST 198.12 – Research: Popular Culture

TBD

CRN 66313

R 10:00-11:50

Restricted to American Studies majors only (Seniors & Juniors; Sophomores with permission).

AMST 198W.13 – The 1890’s (WID)

Dr. Melinda Knight

CRN 66321

W 2:10-4:00

In 1895, with the publication in English of *Degeneration*, Max Nordau created a media sensation with his argument that “degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists.” Nordau's views received much publicity, heightening the perception of decadence as a particular stance toward society. In the 1890s, *fin-de-siècle* became a catch-all term to refer to various developments that challenged the Victorian ideals of restraint, order, virtuousness, and self-control, along with a reaction to the ways in which Western culture embodied the cumulative processes of modernization at the turn of the century. Out of those transformations emerged the culture of modernism, which itself had its origins in *fin-de-siècle* movements of aestheticism and decadence. At the same time, the 1890s witnessed the rise of the modern corporation, new methods of mass production and

consumption, and a phenomenal expansion of the advertising industry, along with a bifurcation of elite and popular culture. This course will explore the *fin-de-siècle* moment in American culture through manifestations of aestheticism, decadence, and bohemianism in literature, the visual arts, music, popular culture, and mass media. *Restricted to students majoring or minoring in AMST, or by permission of instructor. This course satisfies a WID requirement.*

AMST 198.80 – Music Cultures of Black America

Dr. Kip Lornell

CRN 62674

TR 12:45-2:00

This course introduces you to the wealth of African American music found throughout the United States. This semester we'll pay particular attention to the important genres that have developed in the 20th century since the close of WW II. In addition you will be introduced to D.C.'s unique contribution to American culture. Through readings, lectures, video tapes, and musical examples, you will become aware not only of the historical development of the various genres of black American music but their distinctive musical characteristics, performance practices, and aesthetic values.

AMST 198.81 – Topics in African American Literary Studies

Dr. James Miller

CRN 66542

TR 3:35-5:00 & M 7:10-9:40 (film screenings)

Topic for Fall 2007: "African Americans and American Cinema." This course will explore selected moments in the history of African Americans and the American motion picture industry in their social, cultural, political, and economic contexts. Topics to be considered include: early American cinema, 'race movies' of the 1930s, Hollywood 'message movies,' and 'black-exploitation' films, among others.

AMST 801.10 – Washington Sex Scandals

Dr. Chad Heap

CRN 64778

TR 3:45-5:00

Mark Foley and the House pages, Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas: These are a few of the sex scandals that have preoccupied Washington—and much of the rest of the nation—since the early 1990s. Yet, no matter how contemporary such topics might seem, they are but the latest in a long history of sexual controversies in Washington, dating back at least to the presidency of Thomas Jefferson. Focusing on several incidents in the recent and more distant past, this seminar will ask not only what the history of Washington's sex scandals can tell us about Americans' changing attitudes toward sexuality over the past two centuries but also how a careful examination of these scandals can provide new insights into broader historical transformations in American culture and politics, including the shifting contours of American citizenship and the definition of the nation, the shaping of political ideologies and party warfare, the emergence of mass media and its effects on molding public opinion, and the reconfiguration of the boundary between public and private in American life. Students will be introduced to methods of cultural analysis and writing, as well as to research opportunities in local archives and libraries. *This course is restricted to first year undergraduates.*

AMST 801.11 – America in the Twenties / CANCELLED

CRN 66316

Graduate Courses – continue on the next page

GRADUATE COURSES

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AMST 220.80 – Fundamentals of Feminist Theory

Dr. Burack

CRN 64562

W 7:10-9:00 pm

A survey of historical theories significant to feminist thought, such as liberalism, socialism, evolution, psychoanalysis, postmodernism, and additional genres with the purpose of examining feminisms' evolutions through time. *Restricted to Women's Studies and Public Policy Students. Contact the Women's Studies department for permission to register.*

AMST 231.10 – Scope & Methods: American Studies

Dr. Suleiman Osman

CRN 62177

R 6:10-8:00

This course examines the consideration of American Studies as an area for research and teaching; with an introduction to bibliography. Required of candidates for the degree of Master of Arts in the field of American Studies. *Restricted to AMST graduate students only.*

AMST 250.10 – American Material Culture

Dr. Katherine Ott

CRN 66761

M 3:00-5:00 - SMITHSONIAN

Material and visual culture are forms of evidence poorly understood by scholars. It is through objects (whether displayed in museums or purchased at stores and flea markets) and images (such as paintings, films, and photographs) that most people learn about and experience the world. This class examines methods of studying, interpreting, and using these kinds of non-traditional sources as primary evidence. The first half of the course examines theories and methods of reading objects. The second part of the class does the same with images. The class is taught by a Smithsonian history curator and meets off-campus, at the National Museum of American History.

AMST 251.10 – Museum Research and Education

CRN 62161

Internship or independent study at the Smithsonian. To be arranged with department chair before registration.

AMST 252.10 – American Decorative Arts – CANCELLED

CRN 63123

AMST 257.80 – American Folklife

Dr. John Vlach

CRN 64773

T 4:10-6:00

This course will present the materials of American folk culture concentrating particularly on folk architecture, folk crafts, and folk art. The major organizing themes of the course are regionalism and the use of objects as indicators of cultural intention. During the first half of the course we will assess the entire nation in terms of architectural expression. This will be followed by a topical consideration of insights to be gained by the analysis of objects in their social contexts. Readings and a major term paper.

AMST 268.80 – Readings: Cultural History

Dr. Teresa Murphy

CRN 66505

R 2:00-3:50

This course will employ a highly selective rapid-fire approach to readings in American cultural history, focusing on the colonial period and the early nineteenth century. We will read theoretical and applied works from a variety of disciplines that examine the ways in which culture is symbolically organized and the ways in which power is deployed within the culture of the United States during this period.

AMST 273.80 – Readings: Women in American History

Dr. Cynthia Harrison

CRN 66529

R 3:30-6:00

This course will cover important works in American women's history, and the evolution of the field in historiographical context.

AMST 277.80 – Historic Preservation: Principles and Methods

Dr. Richard Longstreth

CRN 63672

MW 4:10-6:00

This course addresses the scope and purpose of the preservation movement in the U.S., focusing on developments since the 1960s. Topics investigated include the development of ideas and approaches to preservation at home and abroad since the late 18th century; the legal framework developed at the national, state, and local levels to foster preservation; the nature of an dynamics between public- and private-sector preservation organizations; and key facets of the research process essential to determine significance and set priorities to protecting historic properties. Throughout the course, both pragmatic and conceptual aspects are explored, as are the implications of preservation practice on broader realms, ranging from our attitudes toward the past to the tangible benefits for a community or business. Preservation must be a practical line of work imbued with political, technical, and economic expertise, but its ultimate worth is as a form of cultural expression.

AMST 284.10 – Visualizing the West

Dr. Frank Goodyear

CRN 62868

M 6:10-8:00

This reading seminar serves as an introduction to American visual studies, paying particular attention to the field's theories and methods. Though a variety of historic periods will be considered, the course will be structured around an examination of different visual documents and the often divergent ways in which scholars have looked at them. The course is also designed to provide graduate students with an introduction to some of the classic primary and secondary sources in American visual studies. In the process of investigating these texts, we will address larger cultural issues, such as identity formation and cultural hierarchies in America. Each week we will focus on a particular primary document. The course aims to provide students with a broad foundation in understanding the many strategies used in reading visual documents. As such, class discussions will focus as much attention on the ways of reading a text, as it will on the text itself and the period from which it comes.

AMST 286.80 – Interpretation: Historic House Museum

Dr. Carol B. Stapp

CRN 62162

T 11:10-1:00

Visit a different historic house every week, meeting with knowledgeable staff and enjoying privileged access. Over the course of the semester, tour the public spaces and/or go behind the scenes of the following sites, among others: Frank Lloyd Wright's Pope/Leighey House (and the adjacent Woodlawn Plantation), the Woodrow Wilson House, Hillwood Museum and Gardens, the Frederick Douglass

National Historic Site, Decatur House, and George Washington's Mount Vernon. The seminar integrates advanced practices of museum education with current scholarship in architectural history, material culture, and social history. Admission by permission of instructor.

AMST 289.12 – Preservation Planning

Dr. Constance Ramirez

CRN 66763

R 4:10-6:00

This course examines issues related to the role of historic preservation in land-use planning. Communities are shaped by local, state, federal, and private decisions. Emphasis is given to how historic resources are treated in local planning activities in the Washington metropolitan area and their relationship to state and federal plans. The course looks at planning as it implements policy and establishes goals and standards for preservation programs and projects within different legal and administrative structures. The course will also examine how historic preservation is integrated into or affected by other kinds of land use plans and decisions, including zoning, housing, transportation, tourism, and economic development. While the emphasis is on urban areas, applications will be made to planning for rural preservation, heritage areas, special situations, and current preservation issues. The class will be taught as a seminar and include discussions, speakers, and student presentations. Projects and papers chosen by the students may be undertaken in small teams or individually, depending upon the topic.

AMST 289.82 – Research: Transnational Culture – The United States & The World

Dr. Tom Guglielmo

CRN 66501

T 2:00-3:50

This is a graduate research seminar on the United States in an international and transnational context. We will focus on individual research and writing—and on reading and commenting on each other's work. The primary course goal is for each student to produce a primary-source research paper that, with slight revision, can be—and will be—submitted to a scholarly journal for publication. We will work collaboratively and deliberately—moving from central questions and reviews of relevant literature to formal proposals and preliminary and final drafts. At term's end, my hope is that you will have produced a paper that you're not only proud of, but one that you're ready—or close to ready—to send out into the wider scholarly world.

AMST 289.83 – Slavery in American History and Memory

Dr. James Horton

CRN 66503

M 2:00-3:50

This is graduate seminar will focus on the history of African American slavery in the British North American colonies and the United States from its early development to its abolition in 1865. It will also examine the memory of slavery as conveyed in American literature and film and its impact on the formation of American culture. American efforts to rationalize its tolerance of slavery with its professed deeply rooted beliefs in human freedom posed a profound national contradiction that gave rise to the racial theories that came to characterize U.S. society. The institution of slavery and the national attempts to deal with its power and presence helped shape the form and substance of American political, economic, and social life until 1865. Its memory continues as a significant aspect of its legacy. This course will define and discuss slavery's continuing impact on America as Americans attempt a meaningful conversation on race in the 21st century.

AMST 295.10 – Independent Study

CRN 62163

AMST 299.10 – Thesis Research

CRN 62164

AMST 300.10 – Thesis Research
CRN 62165

AMST 394.10 – Adv. Reading & Research
CRN 62166

AMST 395.10 – Dissertation Research
CRN 62167

AMST 398.10 – Adv. Reading & Research
CRN 62168

AMST 399.10 – Dissertation Research
CRN 62169

Additional graduate courses in affiliated departments – continue on the next page

Additional Graduate courses in English & History related to the field of American Studies (please consult CCAS Schedule of Classes to confirm details):

ENGLISH

ENGL 203.10 – Intro to Literary Theory
CRN 61958 Lopez W 3:30-6:00

ENGL 235.10 – Twentieth Century
CRN 64762 Moreland T 3:30-6:00

ENGL 244.10 – Ethnicity & Construction of Identity
CRN 66363 Harris T 6:10-8:40

ENGL 247.10 – Postcolonialism
CRN 66364 Daiya M 1:00-03:30

ENGL 261.10 – Selected Topics in Criticism
CRN 62786 McRuer M 6:10-8:40

HISTORY

HIST 220.80 – American Business History
CRN 62978 Becker R 6:10-08:00

HIST 261.10 – Seminar: Modern Latin America
CRN 64529 Klaren M 5:10-07:00

HIST 265.10 – Seminar: Era of American Civil War 1850-77
CRN 66245 (TBD) W 5:10-07:00

HIST 267.10 – Readings/Research Seminar: American Social Thought
CRN 66246 Ribuffo M 6:10-08:00

HIST 273.80 – Readings: Women in American History
CRN 66528 Harrison R 3:30-6:00

HIST 286.80 – The Law of Race and Slavery
CRN 65454 Cottrol M 3:50-05:50