

Introduction to American Studies

American Studies 201-07, #14932
California State University, Fullerton
Spring 2014
M/W 2:30-3:45
Hum-110

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the field of American Studies through an interdisciplinary study of four distinct historical time periods. We will investigate the culture and society of each time period using a variety of approaches and sources. Our general aim is to acquire an increasingly complex understanding of how ideas, values, and experiences have united and divided diverse groups of Americans throughout history. More specifically, we will study how culture “works” to shape notions about what constitutes American national identity. We will begin with an examination of 17th century colonial life, focusing on the Puritan roots of American exceptionalist thinking. Next we will turn our attention to the many spirited reform movements of the antebellum era and the influence of nature, religion, and literature on cultural identity. Then, we will study conflict and change during the progressive era, paying particular attention to the ways in which immigration, labor, and leisure transformed U.S. society. Finally, we will study the rise of youth culture and mass culture during the early Cold War. Each unit and exam will revisit and elaborate upon major themes studied in previous units. The assigned reading will provide period-specific case studies and also model various American Studies approaches.

Required Texts

- Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*
- Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855 edition)
- José M. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960*
- Matthew F. Delmont, *The Nicest Kids in Town: American Bandstand, Rock 'N' Roll, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in 1950s Philadelphia*

All books are available for purchase at Little Professor bookstore, 725 N. Placentia Ave (near the corner of Nutwood and Placentia). Hours: 10 to 5, M-Th; 10-4 Friday; closed weekends (extended and weekend hours during first two weeks of classes; call 714-996-3133).

Learning Goals

American Studies 201 meets General Education “American History, Institutions and Values” requirement (D.3). In line with CSUF’s “Goals of General Education,” this course will encourage students to:

- 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 Assignments and Grading Standards

Three exams will be given: two in-class midterms and an in-class final. See the course schedule below for dates. Exams will challenge you to “connect the dots” by placing reading materials, lectures, and discussions in critical conversation with one another. Exams will typically include short answer identification questions and one or more essay questions. Be sure to purchase an exam booklet for each exam.

Grading:

Midterm #1	30%
Midterm #2	30%
Final Exam	40%

For this course, +/- grading will be used. No extra credit work will be offered. Keep all graded exams so that any discrepancies can be easily and fairly straightened out. Make-up exams will be given only in the case of emergencies, as determined on a case-by-case basis.

A+ 97-100; A 93-96; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; F 0-59

Participation and Community Policies

I expect you to be actively engaged with the classroom community, the concepts, and the coursework. Class attendance is crucial to your participation and to your success on the exams, which require you to synthesize material from readings, lectures, and discussions. Please come to class prepared to 1) explain the central argument and methodology of the assigned reading; 2) assess the assigned reading for its relative strengths and limitations; 3) raise questions about the reading; 4) connect the readings and lecture material to one another; and 5) connect the readings to your broader understanding of contemporary and historical issues in American culture.

It is unacceptable to arrive late or to leave class early. If you must leave class early because of an appointment that cannot be missed, make sure that you tell me before class begins, preferably via email.

Cell phones must be on silent or off (not vibrate) and stowed away out of sight. Do not leave your cell phone on your desk or lap. If you interact with your phone during class, you will be asked to leave.

Laptops may only be used for note taking; going online with your laptop is not permitted in class. If you surf the web during class, you will be asked to leave.

Student Accommodations

CSUF complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing a process for disclosing disabilities and arranging for reasonable accommodations. On the CSUF campus, the Office of Disability Support Services has been delegated the authority to certify disabilities and to prescribe specific accommodations for students with documented disabilities. DSS provides support services for students with mobility limitations, learning disabilities, hearing or visual impairments, and other disabilities. Counselors are available to help students plan a CSUF experience to meet their individual needs. Prior to receiving this assistance, documentation from a qualified professional source must be submitted to DSS. For more information, please contact DSS in UH 101; phone 657-278-3117.

Academic Integrity

Integrity is an essential component of all students' academic experience. Students who violate university standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions, including failure in the course and suspension from the university. Since dishonesty in any form harms the individual, other students, and the university, policies on academic integrity are strictly enforced. I expect that you will familiarize yourself with the academic integrity guidelines found in the current student handbook. [<http://www.fullerton.edu/handbook/>]

Cheating is defined as obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent, or unauthorized means, or helping someone commit an act of academic dishonesty. (UPS 300.021). Examples include, but are not limited to:

Unacceptable examination behavior: communicating with fellow students, copying material from another student's exam or allowing another student to copy from an exam, possessing or using unauthorized materials, or any behavior that defeats the intent of an exam.

Plagiarism: taking the work of another and offering it as one's own without giving credit to that source, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.

Unauthorized collaboration on a project, homework or other assignment where an instructor expressly forbids such collaboration.

Documentary falsification, including forgery, altering of campus documents or records, tampering with grading procedures, fabricating lab assignments, or altering medical excuses.

Campus Emergency Procedures

Students should be familiar with campus **emergency procedures**:

http://www.fullerton.edu/emergencypreparedness/ep_students.html.

American Studies at Fullerton

I am always happy to talk with students 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 would like to learn more about the department or the discipline. For more information on the American Studies Department, visit our website: <http://amst.fullerton.edu/>.

Course Schedule (subject to revision)

Date	Topic	Due
	Puritan Culture	
W, Jan. 22	Introduction to Course	
M, Jan. 27	Course Keywords: Cultural Production, Reception, Context, Work	
W, Jan 29	Puritan Mission: The City Upon a Hill	
M, Feb 3	Family, Work, and Leisure in Massachusetts Bay	Lepore, “What’s in a Name” and Prologue
W, Feb 5	Contact, Conflict, and the Captivity Narrative	Lepore, Ch. 1
M, Feb 10	Depravity, Declension, and the Puritan Jeremiad	
W, Feb 12	The Literal Advantage	Lepore, Ch. 2, 3
M, Feb 17	<i>NO CLASS – Campus Closed</i>	
W, Feb 19	Puritans and the Origins of American Identity	Lepore, Ch. 4, 5
M, Feb 24	MIDTERM #1	
	Antebellum Culture	
W, Feb 26	The Second Great Awakening	
M, Mar 3	Perfectionism and the Spirit of Reform	
W, Mar 5	Nature and Cultural Nationalism	
M, Mar 10	“I Celebrate Myself”: <i>Leaves of Grass</i> discussion	Whitman, “Song of Myself,” stanzas 1-25 (ending “I confound the topmost skeptic”)
W, Mar 12	The Politics of Separate Spheres	
M, Mar 17	The Anti-Slavery Movement	
W, Mar 19	“I Stop Some Where Waiting for You”: <i>Leaves of Grass</i> discussion	Whitman, “Song of Myself,” stanzas 26-52 (end)
M, Mar 24	The Poet of Urban Affection	
W, Mar 26	MIDTERM #2	
	<i>SPRING RECESS</i>	
	Progressive Culture	
M, Apr 7	Immigration, Science, and Pseudo-Science	Alamillo, Introduction, Ch. 1, 2
W, Apr 9	Progressive Reforms and the Right to Childhood	
M, Apr 14	The Rise of Mass Leisure	Alamillo, Ch. 3, 4, 5
W, Apr 16	Work and Play in Southern California	
	Cold War Culture	
M, Apr 21	Security and Insecurity in the Postwar Era	Delmont, Introduction
W, Apr 23	Suburbia, Consumer Citizenship, and the American Dream	
M, Apr 28	Cold War Civil Rights	Delmont, Ch. 1, 2
W, Apr 30	Mass Culture and Its Discontents	Delmont, Ch. 5
M, May 5	The Rise of the Teenager	Delmont, Ch. 6, 7, 8
W, May 7	Conclusion of Course: Culture, History, Identity	
W, May 14	FINAL EXAM, 2:30-4:20	