

American Studies 301(02): American Character
Spring 2015
MW 11:30-12:45 in EC 011

Professor: Dr. Carrie Lane
Office Hours: MW 10:00-11:00am & by appointment
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Description: This course concerns what it means to be an American. For a long time, it was believed there was such a thing as one American “character”—a set of quintessentially American beliefs and behaviors shared by all who lived in this country. We’ve long since learned that America’s character is a lot more complicated than scholars initially thought. This course will explore the “story” of America—our history, ideals, and the realities of American life—through the first-person narratives of individual Americans. We will pay particular attention to the diversity of experiences that make up American life, noting both similarities across groups and divisions between them. We begin by reading the stories of new immigrants to America in the early 20th century. We then skip ahead to WWII to read about the challenges one group of Americans—those of Japanese descent—faced during the war. From there we move to the 1960s and the experiences of black domestic workers and their white employers living in the segregated South. We then hear from generations of American women struggling to achieve equality in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. To explore these topics we’ll use a variety of sources, including oral histories, documentaries, online videos, websites, photographs, and other historical documents.

General Education: This course fulfills G.E. categories D.5 (Explorations in Social Sciences) and Z (Cultural Diversity).

Required Readings:

- *The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans as Told by Themselves: Expanded Edition*, Hamilton Holt [****This is available through the CSUF Library website as a FREE eBook!****]
- *Only What We Could Carry: The Japanese American Internment Experience*, Lawson Fusao Inada [CSUF library has 2 copies in stock]
- *The Maid Narratives: Black Domestic and White Families in the Jim Crow South*, Katherine van Wormer, David W. Jackson III, and Charletta Sudduth [****This is available through the CSUF Library website as a FREE eBook!****]
- Additional **required** readings and videos available on our course website

All books are available at Little Professor Book Center (725 N. Placentia) and the University Bookstore. Try **www.half.com** for cheaper used versions. Let me know **immediately** if you have any trouble getting the books, as I sometimes have copies available to borrow.

Course Requirements: This course entails a combination of lecture and class discussion. I expect you to come to class having completed all assigned reading for that day and prepared with questions and comments for discussion. Bring the readings to class each week so you can reference them in class discussion. All assignments will be submitted through the class Titanium site. The reading load is heavy for a G.E. course, and it is crucial you stay on top of the reading in order to keep up in class. If you're having trouble with a particular reading or topic, I'll be happy to talk it through with you by email or during office hours. I do not take attendance, but it is essential that you attend class consistently, as you will be accountable for material from readings, lectures, and discussions. You will receive a zero for any assignments missed due to absence (this includes quizzes). If you miss a class, you should obtain class notes from one or more of your fellow students.

In-Class Conduct & General Advice:

- Stay on top of the reading. Once you fall behind it's hard to catch up.
- Get to class on time. I make most important announcements in the first 5 minutes.
- Cellphones must be off (not on vibrate) and stowed away (not on your desk).
- No texting. No sleeping. No doing anything other than paying attention to what your classmates and I have to say about the subject matter at hand.
- You are not permitted to take notes on computers or audio record lectures unless specifically authorized to do so by Disabled Student Services.
- Don't be shy with questions—I'm always happy answer your questions, big or small.
- Speaking of questions, always check the syllabus, website, and/or assignment sheets before contacting me, as the answer to your question is probably already there (e.g., When is the final exam? What do we have to read this week? Can I make up quizzes?).

Computer Requirements: To complete this course you must have regular access to a computer with a reasonably fast, reliable Internet connection. You should be comfortable navigating the Internet, downloading files, and sending emails with attachments. Make sure the email address Titanium has for you is one you check regularly, or you'll miss critical communications and updates.

Titanium: If you are not familiar with Titanium, you will need to review CSUF's Titanium support page for students: <http://oasis.fullerton.edu/resources.aspx>. This is also a good first place to check if you have technical questions or problems when accessing or submitting course material. If you are still unable to fix the problem, please contact the University's IT Help Desk via phone at 657-278-7777. If they are unable to help you, or if the technical error continues and interferes with your ability to complete course assignments, email me at clane@fullerton.edu.

Queries Group: Everyone who is enrolled in the class has been placed in the "Queries" discussion group. This is the forum for general questions about the class and for material related to the course that does not directly connect to your group's discussion threads. For example, you might use this forum to ask for advice from your classmates, forward a link to a video or article that reminded you of the class, arrange study groups, or see if anyone has background on a topic that might be useful to you in understanding course readings or discussions. I will respond to all queries within two days (often more quickly), and you may respond to another student's query if you wish. These queries and comments will not be graded and you are not required to post to the "Queries" discussion group.

Assignments: For this class you will take two exams and complete a number of in-class quizzes. All assignments are intended to assess your ability to understand, critique, and analyze assigned materials, to

synthesize complex ideas, and to organize essays which are grounded in evidence and express your individual viewpoint. Due dates for all assignments are given on the Weekly Course Schedule below. All assignments will be submitted via TurnItIn through links provided on our Titanium website. As you probably know, TurnItIn checks for evidence of plagiarism and provides me with a score indicating what percentage of each student's essay can be found in its database of student essays and Internet sources. I reserve the right to modify or add assignments throughout the semester.

Quizzes: Quizzes will cover both lecture and reading material. You may reference your reading and lecture notes while taking the quiz but they are not open book. I recommend taking very good notes as you listen to lectures and do the reading. **You cannot make up quizzes that you miss**, but I will drop your lowest quiz grade so one missed quiz won't hurt your grade.

Exams: You will complete two take-home exams in this class; both are cumulative, covering everything up to that point in the semester. Exam questions will be in essay form and you will be able to use your readings and course notes while writing the exams. Exams will be designed to assess your comprehension and retention of course material as well as your ability to apply course concepts and analytic techniques to new material. Quizzes and reading/viewing guides are good indicators of the sorts of questions, terms, and topics that will appear on exams. I recommend reviewing them carefully and making sure you can answer all questions with specific examples from readings, films, and/or lectures.

Deadlines and Extensions: In preparing for the semester, **please read the entire course syllabus and schedule carefully before the first day of class.** Mark all deadlines in your calendar so you do not accidentally miss an assignment. If you know in advance you will need an extension on an essay or exam (e.g., you'll be out of town or have a big assignment due in another course) you must contact me **before** the due date to arrange an extension. Never simply skip an assignment. Normally, late assignments will be penalized by at least one letter grade per day overdue.

Assignments Deadlines:

Wednesday, March 11: Midterm Exam due by 11:59pm

Wednesday, May 13: Final Exam due by 11:59pm

Grading Procedures:

Quizzes	20%	200 points
Midterm Exam	40%	400 points
Final Exam	40%	400 points
Total	100%	1000 points

Extra Credit: There will be one extra credit opportunity for this course. This assignment will be worth up to 4% (40 points) of your final grade.

A+ Over 100%	B+ 88-89%	C+ 78-79%	D+ 68-69%	F Under 59%
A 93-100%	B 83-87%	C 73-77%	D 63-67%	
A- 90-91%	B- 80-81%	C- 70-71%	D- 60-61%	

All grades will be posted in Titanium's Gradebook as soon as they are available. I will use the +/- grading system in this course. Contact me if you have questions about how to understand the scores you see in Gradebook.

Academic integrity: Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism, and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. When you use information from sources external to yourself, you must reference the source appropriately. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated** and will result in a failing grade on that exam/assignment, as well as possible removal from the course or suspension from the university. For more information on University policies and for tips on how to avoid plagiarism, see the following University website: <http://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/judicial/Letter%20to%20Students.asp>

Students with special needs: Please inform me during the first week of classes about any disability or special needs you may have that may require specific arrangements related to attending class, carrying out assignments, or taking examinations. CSUF requires students with disabilities to register with the Disability Support Services (DSS), located in UH-101 and at 657-278-3117, in order to receive prescribed accommodations appropriate to their disability.

Emergency Procedures: See http://www.fullerton.edu/emergencypreparedness/ep_students.html.

Office Hours and Appointments: I am always happy to talk with you about the course readings, assignments, and broader questions about American Studies. It is a true pleasure for me to get to know you and your intellectual interests, so never hesitate to contact me with any questions or to mull over something you've been thinking about. If you're struggling in the class, contact me sooner, rather than later, so we have time to work together to improve your performance before the semester ends. I am happy to meet with you through email, by phone, or in person.

Policy on Selling Lecture Notes: Per California Education Code Section 66450, it is illegal to reproduce course lectures--including your own hand-written or typed lecture notes--for commercial purposes. Thus while you may occasionally loan another student your lecture notes when they have been absent, it is illegal to request money for those notes or to offer them for sale, online or in person. If you have any questions about this policy, or about what constitutes the legal and ethical sharing of class materials with another student, please contact your professor for guidance. Students who violate this standard are subject to disciplinary sanctions by the University, including failure in the course and suspension from the university. Any student who violates this code will be referred to the Dean of Students Office, Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action under the Student Conduct Code.

AMST 301: American Character
Course Schedule

****Course readings should be completed by class on Monday the week they're assigned unless otherwise noted on the schedule below.****

Introduction: American Studies and Studying Americans

- (1/19 No class: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)**
- 1/21 Read:** The syllabus (read it, then read it again)
 Instructions for Using Titanium

Part I: Immigrant Narratives—Assimilation and Diversity in the Early 20th Century

- 1/26 Read:** *Life Stories*, pp. vii-76 (Introductions, Note, and first 6 stories)
- 2/2 Read:** *Life Stories*, pp. 77-138 (next 6 stories—end w/ “The Life Story of an Indian”)
- 2/9 Read:** *Life Stories*, pp. 139-197 (next 6 stories—end w/ “Hungarian Peon”)

Part II: Stories of Internment—Injustice and Resilience during WWII

- (2/16 No class: Presidents’ Day)**
- 2/18 Read:** *Only What We Could Carry*, pp. xi-65 (Preface, Note, Intro., and Part I)
- 2/23 Read:** *Only What We Could Carry*, pp. 69-149 (Part II)
- 3/2 Read:** *Only What We Could Carry*, pp. 341-412 (Part V, Afterword, & Appendix)
View: Collection of photos of US internment camps (link on Titanium)

MIDTERM EXAM

- 3/9 Midterm Help Session** (attendance is optional)
- 3/11 MIDTERM EXAM DUE:** Upload to Titanium as one document by 11:59pm

Part III: Domestic Narratives: Intimate Segregation in the Jim Crow South

3/16 **Read:** *The Maid Narratives*, pp. 3-111 (Prologue, Part I, and part of Part II)

3/23 **Read:** *The Maid Narratives*, pp. 112-198 (rest of Part II)

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4/6 **Read:** *The Maid Narratives*, pp. 201-286 (Part III & Epilogue)

Part IV: Stories from the Second Wave: The Personal and the Political in Postwar American Feminism

4/13 **Read:** Susan Douglas, excerpts from *Where the Girls Are*

Watch: *Makers*

4/20 **Read:** Susan Brownmiller, excerpts from *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*

Watch: *Makers*

4/27 **Read:** Donna Kate Rushin, "The Bridge Poem"
 Nellie Wong, "When I Was Growing Up"
 Gennie Lim, "Wonder Woman"
 Cherríe Moraga, "La Guera"
 Mitsuye Yamada, "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster"

4/29 **Due:** **Optional Extra Credit Essay**

Conclusion

5/4 Overview and Adieu (no reading)

5/6 **Final Exam Help Session** (attendance is optional)

FINAL EXAM DUE: Wednesday, 5/13 by 11:59pm (submit through Titanium as one document)