

AMST 350 SEMINAR IN THEORY AND METHOD OF AMERICAN STUDIES

AMST 350-01 #16053
California State University, Fullerton
Fall 2013
Mondays/Wednesdays, 1:00-2:15
Room: EC-011

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00, Wednesdays 11:30-12:30, and by appointment

Course Description

This undergraduate seminar is intended to familiarize you with some of the core theoretical and methodological approaches to American Studies. Through readings, discussions, and applied practice, we will focus on various ways to “think” and “do” American Studies. In particular, the course is organized around six dispositions, or “habits of mind,” that are central to an American Studies approach: framing questions about identity and culture; analyzing cultural documents through close reading; placing cultural documents in context; studying change over time; interpreting the work of culture; and practicing collaboration and public engagement. We will study each of these habits of mind in depth and practice applying them to analysis of diverse sources.

Course prerequisites: American Studies 201 and 301

Required Texts

Books

Matthew Frye Jacobson and Gaspar Gonzales, *What Have They Built You To Do? The Manchurian Candidate and Cold War America* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006)

Daphne Carr, *Pretty Hate Machine* (Continuum, 2011)

Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *Lighting Out for the Territory: Reflections on Mark Twain and American Culture* (Oxford, 1996)

All books are available for purchase at Little Professor bookstore, 725 N. Placentia Ave (near the corner of Nutwood and Placentia).

There will also be a number of assigned articles for this course, available on Titanium. Consult the course schedule for the list of readings. Note: course schedule includes shorter citations of the essays; full bibliographic citations are available on the copies available on Titanium.

Films:

Catfish (dir. Joost & Schulman, 2010)

The Manchurian Candidate (dir. John Frankenheimer, 1962)

You are required to view these films in advance of our scheduled discussions and/or reading assignments [see course schedule]. They are available on reserve in the library, or you may acquire them on your own through DVD-rental services. You will be expected to discuss these films in written assignments.

Music Album

Nine Inch Nails, *Pretty Hate Machine* (TVT Records, 1989).

This album will be made available to you for listening via Titanium, or you can acquire it on your own. You should listen to the album before—or as—you read Daphne Carr’s book.

Department of American Studies Student Learning Goals

- Develop a rigorous concept of culture and cultural process as well as an interdisciplinary sensibility, becoming aware of connections among the social sciences and the humanities.
- Gain a thorough understanding of cultural diversity by examining the creative tension between unity and multiplicity in American experiences.
- Understand and interpret the ways in which culture creates meaning and guides behavior.
- Learn research, writing, and expressive skills to see connections among complex materials and to clearly communicate an understanding of the underlying meanings and causes of cultural/historical events.
- Become informed and engaged American citizens, able to situate current political and social issues within their historical and cultural contexts.

Course Assignments and Grading Standards

All papers should be double-spaced, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Please print out your papers and bring them to class; emailed papers will not be accepted. When citing sources, use parenthetical citations of author’s last name and page number. Page limits are imposed in order to challenge you to be clear and concise in your writing.

There are six writing assignments for this course.

There are three short, guided response papers. Consult course schedule for deadlines.

• **Response #1** (3 pages maximum):

In your introduction, explain what “context” means (in your own words) and why it is important in American Studies. Then, describe at least three historical/cultural contexts that Jacobson and Gonzalez believe are relevant for understanding *The Manchurian Candidate*. Why is each context you have described relevant and important?

• **Response #2** (2 pages, maximum):

What is the cultural work of *Pretty Hate Machine*? In your introduction, explain what “cultural work” means. Then, make your own argument about Nine Inch Nails drawing on material from Daphne Carr’s book. You should reference at least two of her interviews, and you should integrate at least one of the habit of mind readings we’ve done this semester into your analysis.

• **Response #3** (4 pages, maximum):

Two parts: First, give at least three different examples from *Lighting Out for the Territory* of ways that Shelley Fisher Fishkin practices collaboration and/or public engagement in her study of Mark Twain. Second: think of specific knowledge you have acquired in an American Studies class that you have taken. Briefly describe one way you could engage the public with this knowledge (something other than writing a book or article about the topic).

There are three longer, independent practice papers. Consult course schedule for due dates.

• **Practice #1** (4 pages, maximum):

Two parts: First (2 pages), identify the themes, assumptions, perspectives, and silences in the film *Catfish* (close reading exercise). You should describe these briefly in separately labeled subsections. Second (2 pages), analyze *Catfish* by using one or more of the theories of identity that we have studied so far in class. You should make an argument about the film, and back it up with evidence from the movie and evidence from the relevant reading.

• **Practice #2** (6-8 pages):

You will write a paper in which you construct a context for understanding and analyzing Anne-Marie Slaughter's article in the July 2012 issue of *The Atlantic*, "Why Women Still Can't Have it All." Two parts: First (2 pages), identify the themes, assumptions, perspectives, and silences in the article (close reading exercise). You should describe these briefly in separately labeled sections. Second (4-6 pages), you will locate an academic article, using library databases, published in the last twenty years, that would be relevant to understanding this essay. Then, you will locate one primary historical source pre-1980 that in your view is relevant to understanding this essay from a historical perspective. Finally, you will identify two contemporary texts (from 2008 or later) that provide a context for understanding and analyzing this essay. One text must be a news media source; the second should come from popular culture (TV, film, or music). In your paper, describe each of your sources in separately labeled subsections and explain how you think they help provide a context for understanding the Slaughter essay.

Practice #3 (4-6 pages):

You will write a research proposal for an American Studies topic of your choice. If you are taking a 401T course in the spring, you may want to design a proposal related to that course's topic. Your proposal should discuss how you plan to address every one of the six habits of mind in your research. You should include central questions you want to explore, a list of potential primary sources you might consult, and a discussion of scholars that we have read that might be theoretically relevant to your research. You do not need to do extensive outside research for this proposal—I am more interested in seeing how you frame a topic, how you brainstorm questions and potential sources, and how you connect your topic to the habits of mind. Please divide your paper into separately labeled subsections for each habit of mind.

Response #1: 10%	Practice #1: 20%
Response #2: 10%	Practice #2: 20%
Response #3: 10%	Practice #3: 20%
Participation: 10%	

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required at every class meeting. Attendance and class participation make up 10% of your final grade. Undergraduate seminars work best when students are actively engaged with the classroom community, concepts, and coursework. Please come to every class prepared to 1) describe the central argument or theme of the assigned reading; 2) assess the reading for its relative strengths and limitations; 3) raise questions about the reading; 4) connect the course readings to one another and to the habits of mind; 5) connect the reading to your broader understanding of contemporary and historical issues in American culture; 6) relate the reading to your own experience and/or areas of expertise.

Late Assignments

An assignment is considered late if it is not turned in at the beginning of the class session in which it is due. Late assignments will be lowered one mark **per day** (NOT per class meeting) after the due date (for example, C to C-). Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis for legitimate reasons and only when a student asks for an extension at least 24 hours before an assignment is due.

Community Policies

- It is unacceptable to arrive late or leave class early. If you must leave class early because of an appointment that cannot be missed, make sure that you tell me via email before class begins.
- Cell phones must be on silent (not vibrate), or preferably turned off. They must be stowed away out of sight.
- No text messaging during class. If you text, you will be asked to leave, and you will receive a “0” for class participation that day.
- Laptops may only be used for note taking; going online with your laptop is not permitted in class.

Grading

For this course, +/- grading will be used. No extra credit will be offered. Keep all graded work so that any discrepancies can be easily and fairly straightened out.

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

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 Disabled Student 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.

Course Schedule (subject to revision)

Date	Topic	Due (Readings & papers are due on <u>Monday</u> of each week, unless otherwise noted)
M, Aug. 26 <i>AND</i> W, Aug 28	Introduction to Course: --Why Study America? --What is American Studies? --The American Studies Habits of Mind	
M, Sep. 2	NO CLASS: Labor Day	
W, Sep. 4	A Brief History of the Field of American Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leila Zenderland, “Constructing American Studies: Culture, Identity, and the Expansion of the Humanities,” in Hollinger, ed., <i>The Humanities and the Dynamics of Inclusion Since World War II</i> (2006)
M, Sep. 9 <i>AND</i> W, Sep. 11	<i>Habit of Mind:</i> Identity and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwyn Kirk & Margo Okazawa-Rey, “Identities and Social Locations: Who Am I?” (2004), rpt. in Rudnick et al, <i>American Identities</i> (2006) • Carla Kaplan, “Identity,” from <i>Keywords for American Cultural Studies</i> (2007) • Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (1990) • Benedict Anderson, excerpt from <i>Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism</i> (1991)
M, Sep. 16 <i>AND</i> W, Sep. 18	<i>Habit of Mind:</i> Close Reading – (Themes, Assumptions, Perspectives, Silences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” from <i>The Anarchy of Empire</i> (2002), rpt in <i>American Studies: An Anthology</i> (2009)
M, Sep. 23 <i>AND</i> W, Sep. 25	<i>Theory into Practice:</i> Analyzing <i>Catfish</i>	<p>Reminder: Reading & paper both due on Monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandra Weber & Claudia Mitchell, “Imaging, Keyboarding, and Posting Identities: Young People and New Media Technologies” (2008) <p>Due: Practice #1 (Analyzing <i>Catfish</i>)</p>

<p>M, Sep. 30 <i>AND</i> W, Oct. 2</p>	<p><i>Habit of Mind:</i> Text and Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eric Greene, “Introduction,” from <i>Planet of the Apes as American Myth</i> (1996) • <i>What Have They Built You</i>, Introduction, Chs. 1, 2 • Watch <i>The Manchurian Candidate</i> (1962)
<p>M, Oct. 7 <i>AND</i> W, Oct. 9</p>	<p><i>Theory into Practice:</i> Reading <i>The Manchurian Candidate</i> in Context</p>	<p>Reminder: Reading and paper both due on Monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What Have They Built You</i>, Chs. 3, 4 <p>Due: Response #1 (Contexts for <i>The Manchurian Candidate</i>)</p>
<p>M, Oct. 14 <i>AND</i> W, Oct. 16</p>	<p><i>Habit of Mind:</i> Change Over Time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter N. Stearns, “Defining Happy Childhoods: Assessing a Recent Change,” <i>Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth</i> 3:2 (Spring 2010) • Paul Boyer, “Exotic Resonances: Hiroshima in American Memory,” from <i>Hiroshima in History and Memory</i> (1996), ed. Michael J. Hogan • <i>What Have They Built You</i>, Ch. 8
<p>M, Oct. 21 <i>AND</i> W, Oct. 23</p>	<p><i>Theory Into Practice:</i> Analyzing “Why Women Still Can’t Have it All”</p>	<p>Reminder: Paper due on Monday</p> <p>Due: Practice #2 (Close reading & context: “Why Women Still Can’t Have it All”)</p>
<p>M, Oct. 28 <i>AND</i> W, Oct. 30</p>	<p><i>Habit of Mind:</i> The Work of Culture</p>	<p>Note: You can read Kelley and Davis for Monday, Pulido & <i>What Have</i> for Wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robin D. G. Kelley, “The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics During World War II,” from <i>Race Rebels</i> (1994) • Lennard J. Davis, “The Rule of Normalcy: Politics and Disability in the USA (United States of Ability),” from <i>Bending Over Backwards</i> (2002), rpt in <i>American Studies: An Anthology</i> (2009) • Laura Pulido, “Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California,” from <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i> (2000), rpt. in <i>American Studies: An Anthology</i> (2009) • <i>What Have They Built You</i>, Ch. 5

M, Nov. 4 <i>AND</i> W, Nov. 6	<i>Habit of Mind:</i> Collaboration and Public Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaine Tyler May, “The Radical Roots of American Studies,” <i>American Quarterly</i> 48:2 (June 1996) • Karen Halttunen, “Groundwork: American Studies in Place,” <i>American Quarterly</i> 58:1 (March 2006) • Sherry Lee Linkon, “Going Public: Teaching and Learning in the Community,” <i>American Quarterly</i> 58:1 (March 2006)
M, Nov. 11	NO CLASS—Veterans Day	
W, Nov. 13	What You Can Do With a Degree in American Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all content on AMST department webpage, “What To Do With an AMST Degree”
M, Nov. 18 <i>AND</i> W, Nov. 20	<i>Theory Into Practice:</i> The Cultural Work of Nine Inch Nails	<p>Reminder: Reading and paper both due on Monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daphne Carr, <i>Pretty Hate Machine</i> <p>Due: Response #2 (Cultural Work of NIN)</p>
M, Nov. 25	NO CLASS: FALL RECESS	
M, Dec. 2 <i>AND</i> W, Dec. 4	<i>Theory into Practice:</i> The Meanings of Mark Twain	<p>Reminder: Reading and paper both due on Monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelley Fisher Fishkin, <i>Lighting Out for the Territory</i> <p>Due: Response #3 (Collaboration & Public Engagement)</p>
M, Dec. 9 <i>AND</i> W, Dec. 11	Conclusion of Course	
TBD – to be determined		Due: Practice #3 (Research Proposal)