

American Studies 350
Theories and Methods in American Studies
Spring 2018
MW 11:30-12:45pm in UH-250

Instructor: Dr. Carrie Lane

Office Hours: MW 1:00-2:00pm; W 9:00-10:00am; & by appointment

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Description: This undergraduate seminar is intended to familiarize you with some of the core theoretical and methodological approaches to American Studies and to give you a sense of the various ways to do American Studies and be an American Studies scholar. In this course, you will learn about the discipline's history and the nature of interdisciplinary research. Course readings are drawn from a variety of disciplines and concern topics as diverse as boxing, sperm, funerals, and eyeliner. Each reading demonstrates a different way to study and think about American culture, and prompts you to identify the benefits, challenges, and implications of particular theories and methods. By the semester's end, you will be prepared to describe what American Studies is, to read critically in American Studies and related disciplines, to engage in lively and informed debate about American culture, and to undertake innovative, interdisciplinary scholarship of your own.

Required Texts:

- Lydia Alix Fillingham, *Foucault for Beginners*
- Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*
- Additional required course readings are available on our Titanium site

All books are available at Little Professor Book Center (725 N. Placentia); look for used copies at half.com. Let me know **immediately** if you have any trouble getting the books.

Requirements and Participation: Your grade will depend on a number of small but intellectually challenging assignments, as well as on class participation. In order to pass this class you must stay up to date on all readings and assignments and actively participate in class discussion. If you are disinclined to speak in class, you may participate in other ways, such as emailing me questions and comments on the week's readings no later than 24 hours before class. I encourage you to seek support and assistance from me and from your classmates. If at any point you fall behind or feel overwhelmed by course readings or assignments, contact me as soon as possible so I can help you catch up.

Attendance: You are expected to attend every class. Although any absence will negatively affect your participation, you are allowed three unexcused absences. After that, each absence, with an exception for critical and documented emergencies, will reduce your final course grade by 10% (one letter grade). **After five absences you will be dropped from the class.**

Assignments & 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. An assignment is considered late if it is not turned in at the beginning of the class session in which it is due. Normally, late assignments will be penalized by one letter grade per day overdue. Never simply skip an assignment. Details on each of the assignments below will be provided in class.

Theory Paper (3-4 pages): For this assignment you'll consider how each of the theorists of power we've discussed would go about studying the same topic. Your papers should demonstrate that you understand each theorist's approach and can apply their theories to the study of US culture. **Assignment Goal:** Learn how to summarize theoretical approaches; learn how to apply different theoretical perspectives to a single subject matter; learn how to conceptualize original research projects.

Historical Documents Paper (3-4 pages): For this assignment you will select three primary documents from a specific historical era and analyze them within their historical context and using Gail Bederman's arguments from *Manliness and Civilization*. **Assignment Goal:** Learn how to analyze documents within their historical and cultural context; learn how to apply a scholar's argument to a new document.

Mini-Ethnography (6-8 pages): For this assignment you'll use observation and interviews to study an aspect of US culture that is unfamiliar to you. In addition to describing and analyzing the culture you will reflect on the experience of conducting ethnographic research in an unfamiliar setting. **Assignment Goal:** Learn how to conduct interviews and participant-observation; learn how to analyze a culture through the worldview of its members.

Letter of Application (1 page): In this final assignment, you will have to write a (no more than 1 page) letter of application to your dream job (or grad school) that explains why American Studies prepares you for that position. **Assignment Goal:** Prepare you for the job market and/or graduate school application process; allow you to consolidate what you've learned about American studies over the semester and apply it in a practical context.

In grading your assignments and exams, I will pay close attention to both substance and form (grammar, spelling, organization, and clarity of expression). In evaluating the substance of an essay, I will examine whether you have demonstrated a critical understanding of course materials and presented and substantiated a coherent thesis or argument. I reserve the right to modify or add assignments throughout the semester.

Grading Procedures:

Theory Paper	25%	250 points	Due 3/14
Context Paper	25%	250 points	Due 4/11
Ethnography	30%	300 points	Due 5/2
Application Letter	10%	100 points	Due 5/9
Participation	10%	100 points	
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	100%	1000 points	

The +/- grading system will be used. Keep all graded assignments so that any discrepancies can be easily and fairly straightened out. This course satisfies the University's Upper-Division Writing Requirement. Earning a grade of C or better is necessary to meet this requirement. At this point in time I do not plan to offer any extra credit assignments for this course.

A	92-100%	B-	80-81%	D+	68-69%
A-	90-91%	C+	78-79%	D	62-67%
B+	88-89%	C	72-77%	D-	60-61%
B	82-87%	C-	70-71%	F	Under 59%

Office Hours: I strongly encourage you to attend office hours or to schedule an appointment if those hours do not work with your schedule. I am always happy to talk with you about the course readings, assignments, and broader questions about American Studies and academic life. It is a pleasure for me to get to know you and your intellectual interests, so never hesitate to drop by with questions or to mull over something you've been thinking about. If you're struggling in the class, please contact me sooner rather than later so we have time to work together to improve your performance before the semester ends.

Phone Policy: Please turn phones off and keep them in your bag.

Computer Policy: You are not permitted to take notes on computers or audio record lectures unless specifically authorized to do so by Disability Support Services.

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. If you need to arrive late or leave early please notify me in advance.

- **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.
- Don't be shy with questions—I'm happy to answer them, big or small. However, be sure to check the syllabus, website, and/or assignment sheets before contacting me in case the answer is already available (e.g., When is the paper due? What are we reading this week?).

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.

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 657-278-8888. 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.

Student Information Page: Visit <http://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/syllabus.php> for info on:

- Disability Support Services
- Academic Dishonesty Policy
- Emergency Preparedness
- Student Learning Goals and Outcomes
- Library Resources

AMST 350 Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Due: <i>Readings are due Monday of each week unless otherwise noted.</i>
Mon 1/22 Wed 1/24	Introduction	None
Mon 1/29 Wed 1/31	History of American Studies	* 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)
Mon 2/5 Wed 2/7	Theory: Hegemony	* Kate Crehan, "Subaltern Culture" in <i>Gramsci, Culture, & Anthropology</i> (2002) * Video: "Hegemony: 10 Minute Philosophy" * Video: "Hegemony WTF: Gramsci and Cultural Hegemony"
Mon 2/12 Wed 2/14	Theory: Discourse	* Lydia Alix Fillingham, <i>Foucault for Beginners</i> (2007) * Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm," <i>Signs</i> (1991)
Wed 2/21 <i>(no class 2/19— Presidents' Day)</i>	Theory: Resistance	* James C. Scott, <i>Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts</i> (Yale UP 1990), ix-xiii, 1-44
Mon 2/26 Wed 2/28	Theory: Intersectionality	* Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" * Kimberlé Crenshaw, "TED Talk: The Urgency of Intersectionality"

Mon 3/5 Wed 3/7	Theory: Imagined Communities	* Benedict Anderson, "Census, Map, and Museum," <i>Imagined Communities</i> (1983)
Mon 3/12 Wed 3/14	Theory: Wrap-up	Wed 3/14: Theory Paper Due
Mon 3/19 Wed 3/21	Historical Context	* Gail Bederman, Ch. 1-2 <i>Manliness and Civilization</i> (1996) W 3/21 Library Session PLN-103
* * 3/26 & 4/1: SPRING BREAK -- NO CLASS * *		
Mon 4/2 Wed 4/4	Historical Context	* Bederman, Ch. 4 * Charlotte Perkins Gilman, <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i>
Mon 4/9 Wed 4/11	Historical Context	Wed 4/11: Context Paper Due
Mon 4/16 Wed 4/18	Worldview: Interpreting Culture	* Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture," pp. 3-30 in <i>The Interpretation of Cultures</i> (1973) * Harry Wolcott, <i>The Art of Fieldwork</i> , 2nd Edition (AltaMira 2005). pp. 79-114
Mon 4/23 Wed 4/25	Worldview: Making Sense of the Unfamiliar	* Alexa Hagerty, "Speak Softly to the Dead: The Uses of Enchantment in American Home Funerals," <i>Social Anthropology</i> , 22:4 (November 2014): 428-442 * Harel Shapira, "Calvin's Problem: Racial Identity and Gun Ownership," <i>Public Culture</i> 29: 2 (2017): 221-226 * Elijah Anderson, "Rittenhouse Square," pp. The Cosmopolitan Canopy (2011): 104-151 Mon 4/23: Project Proposal Due

<p>Mon 4/30 Wed 5/2</p>	<p>Careers in American Studies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Colvin, "Humans are Underrated" * ASA, "American Studies Careers" * Ibson, "What's the Use? American Studies after Graduation" * Foster, "What to Do with a Degree in American Studies" * Duckworth, "No Passion? Don't Panic" * Profiles of CSUF AMST alumni * FAQs: Applying to American Studies Graduate Programs * CSUF AMST Graduate Program Info <p>Wed 5/2: Mini-Ethnography Due</p>
<p>Mon 5/7 Wed 5/9</p>	<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>Wed 5/9: Application Letters Due</p>