

# AMST 201: INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN STUDIES

Spring 2016 • Section 16266 • Mo We 1-2:15 pm • LH-307



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## Course Description

What does it mean to be American? Who gets to define nation and how do these ideas change over time? How have ethics and leadership shaped the contours of this country? Who is considered American and who is not? Who has fought for inclusion and how have various revolutions changed the very meaning of America?

This course examines shifting conceptions of nation through four periods in U.S. history. Beginning with the Revolutionary Era (1766-1824), we investigate the birth of American national culture and the conflicts of race, class, and gender that shaped the nation's founding. We will then explore the American frontier and Progressivism (1880-1924) that came to define the nation at the turn of the century. Cold War and Civil Rights (1945-1969) will be our next stop where we consider how nuclear anxieties, popular media, and protest culture challenged the meaning of American democracy. We end our investigation by looking at conservatism, AIDS, war, and uprisings that redefined the nation on the eve of the millennium (1980-2000). Each unit builds upon the other to explore the shifting and fluid boundaries of American civilization and culture.

As an introduction to American Studies, the course highlights how interdisciplinary approaches reveal histories that are rich and diverse. We will also learn how culture is serious business with the power to shape, inform, and intervene in politics. To this end, we will analyze an array of materials including essays, speeches, legal cases, songs, poems, paintings, photographs, literature, comics, and films.

## General Education Requirement

American Studies 201 meets the General Education "American History, Institutions and Values" Requirement (D.3)

This course is also part of the GE Ethics and Leadership Pathway—a CSUF-wide initiative to strengthen the coherence of your general education experience with a thematic focus in a selection of GE courses. Learn more about Pathways:

[http://www.fullerton.edu/undergraduate/generaledu/general\\_pathways.asp](http://www.fullerton.edu/undergraduate/generaledu/general_pathways.asp)

## Course Objectives and Learning Goals

This course provides an introduction to American Studies themes and interdisciplinary methods. The study of culture, race, class, gender, and sexuality will be central to our inquiry. This course fulfills the General Education Requirement D.3 by teaching students to:

- Understand diverse histories of the United States from multiple perspectives
- Recognize how cultural, intellectual, ethical, economic, and political struggles have shaped American society, past and present
- Comprehend the historical development of American institutions and values and their impact on the lives of Americans
- Recognize the ways in which diverse groups have developed and challenged American society, institutions, and values
- Critically assess how the government and constitution shape American society
- Understand the U.S. in the context of global politics and events
- Analyze a range of primary source materials, engage in critical and constructive discussions, and communicate effectively in writing

## Required Texts

The following books are required for this course and can be purchased at Little Professor Text Books, 725 North Placentia Avenue, Fullerton, 92831; (714) 996-3133.

- Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005)
- Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) (available as e-book through the Pollak Library)
- All other required readings will be available on TITANium

## Course Assignments

### Quizzes (5 quizzes x 20 points each = 100 points)

Throughout the semester, there will be 6 online quizzes to measure your comprehension of lecture and readings. The lowest grade will be dropped. The quizzes will be announced in class and you will have 24 hours after the announcement to take the quiz. To do well, it is essential that you attend lecture, keep up with weekly readings, and take detailed notes.

### Essay (200 points)

In a 3-page essay, answer the prompt below. No outside research is necessary; you may rely on materials from the class.

Submit your paper as a word document through Turnitin via TITANium by midnight on Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

[Paper mechanics: 3 pages; double-spaced; 1-inch margins; Times New Roman font size 12.]

- Essay Prompt: During Unit I on the American Revolution, we learned about Phyllis Wheatley. In your essay, describe who she was and why she is significant to our understanding of the American Revolution. Then offer a close reading of the following poem. Why was this poem significant? What messages did she convey in the poem and how were they connected to the Revolution? Be sure to use evidence from lecture *and* the Gary Nash book to support your claims.

### On Being Brought from Africa to America

'Twas mercy brought me from my *Pagan* land,  
 Taught my benighted soul to understand  
 That there's a God, that there's a *Saviour* too:  
 Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.  
 Some view our sable race with scornful eye,  
 "Their colour is a diabolic die."  
 Remember, *Christians*, *Negros*, black as *Cain*,  
 May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

#### In-Class Midterm Exam (300 points)

The in-class midterm exam will be on Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. The exam will be a combination of ID and short answer questions based on readings, lectures, films, and discussions covered through Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup>. Bring a blue book.

#### In-Class Final Exam (400 points)

The in-class final exam will be on Monday, May 16, 2:30-4:20 pm. The exam will be a combination of ID and short answer questions that will cover material from the second half of the class (from Monday, March 21 to Wednesday, May 11). The final exam will also include one essay question for which material from any part of the course may be used.

#### **Important Dates At-A-Glance**

Week 6: Wednesday, March 2	Essay due at midnight via Turnitin
Week 8: Wednesday, March 16	Midterm Exam
Finals Week: Monday, May 16 2:30-4:20 pm	Final Exam

#### **Grading Structure**

Quizzes	10%	100 points
Essay	20%	200 points
Midterm Exam	30%	300 points
Final Exam	40%	400 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

A+	98 – 100%	980 – 1000 points	C	73 – 77%	730 – 770 points
A	93 – 97%	930 – 970 points	C-	70 – 72%	700 – 720 points
A-	90 – 92%	900 – 920 points	D+	68 – 69%	680 – 690 points
B+	88 – 89%	880 – 890 points	D	63 – 67%	630 – 670 points
B	83 – 87%	830 – 870 points	D-	60 – 62%	600 – 620 points
B-	80 – 82%	800 – 820 points	F	0 – 59%	0 – 590 points
C+	78 – 79%	780 – 790 points			

### Course Policies

We all play a critical role in the success of this class. By following the codes of conduct below, we will learn how to think critically and analytically, and how to productively articulate our thoughts. We will also learn how to actively listen, build upon each other's ideas, and create a democratic space where a multitude of perspectives are welcomed and valued.

By taking this course, you agree to:

- Attend each class and arrive on time
- Complete *all* of the assigned readings before coming to class and bring your notes
- Actively and respectfully engage in class discussions
- Participate in and contribute to group activities
- Be fully present when you are in class (i.e. turn off cell phones, no texting, no web surfing, no wandering in and out of the classroom, etc.)
- Keep up with the materials covered in lecture. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate and come to office hours with any questions
- Do your own work. See the “Academic Honesty” section below.
- Come to office hours with any questions, concerns about your performance in the class, etc.

**A note about emails:** I prefer that you come to my office hours, but if you have a quick question feel free to email me. Before you contact me, please refer to your syllabus (also available on TITANium) to see if you can find the answer there. I usually respond within 24 hours for emails received M-F. For emails sent after 5pm on Fridays or over the weekend, I will respond on Monday.

**Phone policy:** Please turn phones off and keep them in your bags.

**A note about computers and tablets:** We live in a digital age (hooray!) but it can distract you and those around you from learning (boo!) So let's make a deal: I will do my utmost to keep you engaged and will allow you to use computers and tablets if they are being utilized to enhance your learning. Please only use these devices for note taking and following along with the Powerpoint presentation. I know it seems impossible to stay off Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. but out of respect for me and your classmates, please refrain from checking into your social media world—I promise you that it will still be there when class is over!

**Student Accommodations:** If you have a disability or special need for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please inform the instructor and contact the Office of Disability Support Services as early as possible in the term. The Office of Disability Support Services is located in University Hall 101. For more information, call (657) 278-3117 or visit their website at <http://www.fullerton.edu/DSS/>

**Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty is essential to maintaining an optimal learning environment. Cheating on exams or assignments is, of course, not permitted. Plagiarism—taking the work (words, ideas, concepts, data, graphs, artistic creation, etc.) of another whether that work is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near verbatim form and offering it as one's own without giving credit to that source—will result in an automatic zero on the assignment and will be reported to the campus Judicial Affairs Officer. All students are expected to understand and abide by the University's policies on Academic Dishonesty:

<http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/documents/PDF/300/UPS300-021.pdf>

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center offers all registered students the opportunity to receive free writing assistance. In half-hour long sessions, students work with a tutor to create and/or improve specific assignments and, more importantly, to improve their overall writing skills. Tutors and students can work together to develop strong thesis statements, decide upon the best organization for a paper, improve sentence structure, and build an argument with sufficient evidence, for example.

The Writing Center is located on the first floor of Pollak Library North. Walk past the research desk, turn left after the clusters of computers, and look for the Writing Center Sign near the northwest corner. For more info call (657) 278-3650 or visit:

[http://english.fullerton.edu/writing\\_center/index.asp](http://english.fullerton.edu/writing_center/index.asp)

To schedule an appointment online go to:

[http://english.fullerton.edu/writing\\_center/appointments.asp](http://english.fullerton.edu/writing_center/appointments.asp)

**University Learning Center:** The goal of the University Learning Center is to provide all CSUF students with academic support in an inviting and contemporary environment. The staff of the University Learning Center is carefully selected and trained to assist students with their academic assignments, general study skills, and computer user needs. The ULC is located in Pollack Library North, 2nd Floor. The services that the ULC provide to the CSUF students include an open computer lab, tutoring, workshops, online tutoring, and collaborative learning. The online tutoring option allows students to submit their paper for constructive feedback.

<http://www.fullerton.edu/ulc/>

**Emergency Procedures:** Please familiarize yourself with CSUF's emergency preparedness procedures. <http://prepare.fullerton.edu/>

NOTE: The contents of this syllabus are subject to change.

<b>Course Schedule</b> * = Readings available on TITANIum		
<b>Unit I: The Revolution and Establishing Nation, 1766-1824</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>To Do</b>
<b>M 1/25</b> <b>week 1</b>	Course Introduction	
<b>W 1/27</b> <b>week 1</b>	What is American Studies? How do “Ethnics and Leadership” shape America?	<b>Read</b> entire syllabus. Come to class with questions.  <b>Explore website</b> *CSUF Dept. of American Studies
<b>M 2/1</b> <b>week 2</b>	Contact Zones: A Prehistory of the Revolution	<b>Read</b> Nash, Chapter 1 “Roots of Radicalism”  <b>Take reading notes.</b> In this chapter, Nash takes us back before the actual revolution to consider the “roots of radicalism.” Nash describes 7 incidents to help us understand the preconditions of the revolution. Briefly describe 3 of the incidents. According to Nash, why were these incidents significant? How did they lay the groundwork for the Revolution?
<b>W 2/3</b> <b>week 2</b>	Life in the colonies	
<b>M 2/8</b> <b>week 3</b>	The Revolution, Part I & Writing Workshop	<b>Read</b> Nash, Chapter 3 “Building Momentum, 1766-1774”  <b>Read</b> *Lynn Hunt, “How Writing Leads to Thinking (And not the other way around),” <i>Perspectives on History</i> (Feb. 2010).  <b>Take reading notes.</b> In this chapter, Nash highlights the “road to revolution” between 1766 and 1774. What were the Stamp Act and the Townshend duties? How were they significant to the Revolution? Who was Phyllis Wheatley? How is she significant to our understanding of the revolution?
<b>W 2/10</b> <b>week 3</b>	The Revolution, Part II	
<b>M 2/15</b> <b>week 4</b>	Presidents’ Day Campus closed	
<b>W 2/17</b> <b>week 4</b>	What is an “American”?	<b>Read</b> Nash, Chapter 5 “The Dual Revolution, 1776-1778”  <b>Take reading notes.</b> In this chapter, Nash questions whether or not the Declaration of Independence meant equality for all. Briefly describe how African Americans, Native Americans, and women participated in the Revolution. What was each of these groups fighting for?

<b>Unit II: American Frontiers and Progressive Ideals at the Turn-of-the-Century, 1880-1924</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>To Do</b>
<b>M 2/22</b> <b>week 5</b>	The Nation after Civil War	<b>Read</b> Bederman, Ch. 1: Remaking Manhood through Race and ‘Civilization’  <b>Take reading notes.</b> List the 3 questions that Bederman states she will examine. How does she explore some of these questions through the example of Jack Johnson? In other words, how does Jack Johnson’s story demonstrate her points?
<b>W 2/24</b> <b>week 5</b>	Race, Immigration, and Industry	
<b>M 2/29</b> <b>week 6</b>	The South	<b>Read</b> Bederman, Ch. 2: ‘The White Man’s Civilization on Trial’: Ida B. Wells, Representations of Lynching, and Northern Middle-Class Manhood  <b>Take reading notes.</b> Who was Ida B. Wells and why was her work significant? Describe two of Wells’ arguments against lynching.
<b>W 3/2</b> <b>week 6</b>	The Gilded Age: Gendered Respectability & Class	<b>Essays Due via Turnitin by midnight</b>
<b>M 3/7</b> <b>week 7</b>	Borders and the American Frontier	<b>Read</b> Bederman, Ch. 5: Theodore Roosevelt: Manhood, Nation, and ‘Civilization’  <b>Take reading notes.</b> How did “manliness” and “masculinity” factor into Roosevelt’s policies? Give two examples from this chapter.
<b>W 3/9</b> <b>week 7</b>	U.S. Empire: Expanding to the Pacific	
<b>M 3/14</b> <b>week 8</b>	Progressivism	
<b>W 3/16</b> <b>week 8</b>	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>Bring a blue book</b>

Unit III: Cold War and Civil Rights, 1945–1969		
Date	Topic	To Do
<b>M 3/21</b> week 9	What was the Cold War?	<p><b>Watch</b> * “Duck and Cover” Public Service Announcement (1951)</p> <p><b>Read</b> *Susan Southard, “What U.S. citizens weren’t told about the atomic bombing of Japan” <i>Los Angeles Times</i>, August 7, 2015</p> <p><b>Take reading notes.</b> How did “Duck and Cover” and Southard’s article alter your understanding of atomic bombs? Compare and contrast the messages of each text. How does each help us better understand the historical context from which they came?</p>
<b>W 3/23</b> week 9	Cold War Cultures	
spring break (3/28-4/1) enjoy!		
<b>M 4/4</b> week 10	Suburbs and Mass Consumption	<p><b>Read</b> *Betty Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name,” from <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> (1963)</p> <p><b>Take reading notes.</b> Betty Friedan wrote <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> in 1963—what was so powerful about her message especially at this point in history?</p>
<b>W 4/6</b> week 10	Cold War, Civil Rights	
<b>M 4/11</b> week 11	Legacy of <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	<p><b>Read</b> *Mary Dudziak, Introduction and Ch. 1: Coming to Terms with Cold War Civil Rights</p> <p><b>Take reading notes.</b> What is Dudziak’s main argument? Give one example from Ch. 1 that serves as an example of her primary argument.</p>
<b>W 4/13</b> week 11	Cold War Orientalism	
<b>M 4/18</b> week 12	Bandung and Other Revolutions	<p><b>Read</b> *Richard Wright, <i>The Color Curtain</i> (excerpts)</p> <p><b>Take reading notes.</b> In his book, Wright describes his experiences attending the Afro-Asian Conference in 1955. What did he find to be significant about the conference?</p>
<b>W 4/20</b> week 12	Guest Lecture: Stepan Serdiukov	

<b>Unit IV: America at the Cusp of the Millennium, 1980–2000</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>To Do</b>
<b>M 4/25</b> <b>week 13</b>	Rise of Right and Narrating AIDS	<p><b>Read</b> *"A history of AIDS hysteria," Salon.com</p> <p><b>Listen to Podcast:</b> *"The Ghosts of Fire Island," <i>Unfictional</i> (KCRW)</p> <p><b>Read</b> *Daniel C. Hallin and Todd Gitlin, "Agon and Ritual: The Gulf War as popular culture" <i>Political Communication</i> volume 10, pp. 411-424.</p> <p><b>Take reading notes.</b> You know the drill. But this time since you are reading/listening to different pieces, focus on the primary point of each and ask yourself: "How does this piece alter my previous understanding of this topic?"</p>
<b>W 4/27</b> <b>week 13</b>	Remaking American Power: The Gulf War	
<b>M 5/2</b> <b>week 14</b>	In-class film: <i>Wet Sand: 10 Years After the LA Riots</i>	<p><b>Read</b> *Angela Flournoy, "Watts 1965: Riot or revolt?" <i>Los Angeles Times</i> (Aug. 15, 2015)</p> <p><b>Read</b> *Edward T. Chang and Jeannette Diaz-Veizades, "The Media, the Invisible Minority, and Race," from <i>Ethnic Peace in the American City: Building Community in Los Angeles</i>.</p> <p><b>Read</b> *The LA Riots: 20 Years Later. Voices from the Chaos, <i>Los Angeles Times</i> (April 29, 2012)</p> <p><b>Take reading notes.</b> How does each article alter the way that you think about civil unrest?</p>
<b>W 5/4</b> <b>week 14</b>	Uprisings, Rap, and Other Discontents	

<b>M 5/9 week 15</b>	Connecting past and present #Blacklivesmatter	<p><b>Read</b> *Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” <i>The Atlantic</i> (June 2014)</p> <p><b>Read</b> *Dexter Thomas, “Nine Internet Moments that Mattered: New era for discussing race”</p> <p><b>Explore website</b> *#Blacklivesmatter</p> <p><b>Take reading notes.</b> These articles and sites ask us to connect the past to the present. What connections can you make between this week’s readings and discussions from Unit I (American Revolution), Unit II (Frontiers and Progressivism) and Unit III (Cold War, Civil Rights)?</p>
<b>W 5/11 week 15</b>	Closing remarks	
<b>M 5/16 finals week</b>	<b>Final Exam 2:30-4:20 pm</b>	<b>Final Exam. Bring a blue book</b>