

American Studies

Fall 2024

Course Booklet



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UNIVERSITY
OF MIAMI



American Studies

The Program in American Studies at the University of Miami fosters the interdisciplinary study of American culture and society and explores the place of the United States in an increasingly interconnected world. Our faculty come from a wide range of fields, including history, literature, religion, art, philosophy, law, music, ethnic studies, architecture, sociology, communications, and education. What unites them is the commitment to examining the U.S. from multiple perspectives, highlighting the diversity of people, cultures, and experiences that have shaped the past and present United States. The Program places analysis of globalization at its center, and offers a hemispheric perspective that allows students and faculty to explore interests in the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Pacific Rim, and other border crossings.

The undergraduate curriculum in American Studies encourages students to bridge the divide between disciplines by examining specific themes and topics in an engaging, dynamic, interdisciplinary manner. By exposing students to courses that place questions of cultural diversity, regional difference, ethnic and racial identity, gender and sexuality, class dynamics, and popular culture at the forefront of intellectual investigation, the **Program in American Studies** enables them to situate their own experiences in a wider context. It also exposes them to a multiplicity of perspectives that inform our understanding of the United States and its place in a global society. The Program strongly encourages its majors to study abroad, and faculty members help students plan their curriculum to make that option feasible.

MAJOR in American Studies (30 credits)

1. Introduction to American Studies (**AMS 101**). Specific topics for this course may change annually; its purpose will be to acquaint beginning students with the approaches and areas of inquiry common to the field.
2. **AMS 310**: The U.S., Transnationalism, and Globalization.
3. At least **two advanced seminars** in American Studies at the 300-level or above.
4. At least one course in **American history** and at least one course in **American literature**.
5. **Three courses**, chosen in consultation with an American Studies advisor, ***in a specialized area of American Studies (200 level or higher)***. Students may work in areas including, but not limited to, ethnic studies, Caribbean Studies, Latino/a Studies, environmental studies, communication studies, women's literature, urban studies, African American studies, religious studies and material culture studies.

Students must take courses from at least three different departments in order to fulfill the requirements for the major.

6. **AMS 501**: Senior Project. In addition, all majors must complete AMS 501: *Senior Project*. This capstone course can take the form of an individual research project or an internship at a local cultural or civic institution. For the research option, students will identify an appropriate faculty member to supervise and grade the project, and then obtain approval from the program director before proceeding with the project. The student must produce a substantial written report or research paper, the format of which will be determined by the faculty member and student in consultation with the program director. For the internship option, students will partner

with any number of local institutions and produce a creative and/or scholarly project for evaluation. The internship will be arranged through the program director, in consultation with the Butler Center. The final product will be evaluated by the program director.

American Studies majors with a cumulative *GPA of at least 3.5 in AMS courses* and an overall GPA of at least 3.0 may earn departmental honors by completing:

AMS 505: Honors Thesis. Candidates for departmental honors are responsible for finding a faculty member to serve as thesis advisor. Students then must complete a thesis proposal of approximately 500 words that must be approved by the thesis advisor and the program director. The format and length of the thesis will vary according to the nature of the project. Students would take AMS 501 in the fall semester of the senior year and AMS 505 in the spring to complete the honors thesis.

MINOR in American Studies (15 credits)

1. Introduction to American Studies (**AMS 101**).
2. **AMS 310:** The U.S., Transnationalism, and Globalization
3. At least one course in American history or American literature.
4. Advanced seminar in American Studies (**300-level or higher**).

For an advising appointment, please contact the Program Director.

Fall 2024

AMS 101- Intro to American Studies

"Forming Identities in American Culture"

Instructor: Aldo Regalado

Section K: MW 6:35pm-7:50pm

Dooly Memorial 119

Course Description: This course is structured as an introduction to the key ideas and methods in the field of American Studies, particularly American cultural studies. To accomplish this, we will take a thematic approach, looking at the theory and practice of identity formations and how they manifest in American life. To imagine one's identity in relation to the imagined space of the United States is an effort that is at once fraught and yet full of possibilities. This course will explore those problems and possibilities in identity formation through a variety of written and visual texts from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. We will endeavor through the theme of identity to learn about American culture in a local and global context, and about the processes of studying American culture. Coursework will include readings, class discussions, group presentations, and papers.

AMS 101- Intro to American Studies

"Free at Last:" Reimagining Race and Nationhood in the Americas

Instructor: Gabriel Das Chagas

Section DE: TTHu 11:00-12:15pm

Whitten LC 184

Course Description: The first module of the course critically approaches race in Brazil and the U.S. Exploring the "myth of racial democracy," we will analyze Brazilian visual arts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These classes will provide some context on key topics, such as eugenics, racial segregation, and the division of labor. Moreover, we will discuss the circulation of Brazilian modernists' works in the USA to question what "Brazilianness" means from the hegemonic North American gaze. Then, we will compare cultural representations of race and class during the Great Depression in the 1930s through excerpts from John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* in dialogue with Tarsila do Amaral and Candido Portinari's paintings.

The second module of the course focuses on the Harlem Renaissance and the *Négritude* movement in the Caribbean. We start with a brief study of jazz and continue with an analysis of Aaron Douglas, Richard Bruce Nugent, and Wifredo Lam's visual art. Examining race, gender, and coloniality, students will read works by W.E.B DuBois, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Zora Neale Hurston, Paulette Nardal, and Angela Davis. We will also analyze literary texts by Langston Hughes and Claude McKay to explore the relationship between Blackness, place, and identity. Finally, we will study how Hughes translated the poetry of Cuban writer Nicolas Guillén into English.

The third part of the class focuses on the contemporary representation of Black culture in audiovisual works. We will discuss the films *If the Beale Street Could Talk* (2018), based on James Baldwin's novel, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (2020), and *American Fiction* (2023).

This seminar has four main objectives: 1) To offer an interdisciplinary introduction to American Studies; 2) To expand students' knowledge of cultural traditions in Portuguese, French, Spanish, and English through multiple artistic forms; 3) To develop students' theoretical foundation on decolonial and intersectional frameworks; and 4) To explore divergences and similarities between the history and cultural production of the U.S., Brazil, and the Caribbean.

AMS 321 Topics in American Studies: History

“Objects in History”

Instructor: Dr. Ashli White

RLEC: T/Th 2:00-3:15

Dooly Memorial 205

Course Description: In this seminar we will explore what objects reveal about the lives of diverse Americans in the past. Working with items from the Lowe Art Museum and Richter Library's Special Collections, we will engage with various types of things—from ceramics, metalwork, and textiles to maps, prints, and photographs. As part of our endeavor, we will appraise how historians have approached this unconventional, yet powerful, source base: the questions they have asked, the methods they have used, and the conclusions they have reached. Drawing inspiration from this scholarship as well as our own research into objects, the class will create a digital exhibition that showcases your interpretations of the historical meanings of objects.

Co-listed with HIS 267

AMS 321 Topics in American Studies: History

“The American Civil War”

Instructor: Dr. Michael Bernath

C Lecture: MW: 10:10 11:00am Whitten Learning Center 192

Students must sign up for discussion section either His 364-7E (F. 12:20-1:10 Dooly/ Mem 114) or His 364-7G (F. 2:30-3:20, Dooley Mem 106)

Course Description: This course explores the most cataclysmic event in American history. We will examine the Civil War as a revolutionary experience, an event that touched and radically transformed nearly every aspect of American life, and indeed, redefined the very meaning of the United States itself. This course will not be confined to battles and generals. While the military struggle will not be neglected, the primary focus of the course will be on the political, social, economic, and cultural aspects of the war. The Civil War has rightly been called “the crossroads of our being.” It fundamentally altered northern and southern society, ended the institution of slavery, and forever changed the course of American history. Today, the United States is still touched, and in many ways defined, by the legacy of the Civil War.

Co-listed with HIS 364

AMS 322 Topics in American Studies: Literature

“Black Miami Studies”

Instructor: Dr. Donette Francis & Terri Francis

Section CD, MW 10:10-11:25am

Allen Hall 210

Course Description: *Satisfies the English literature major and minor requirement for a course in [Diversity and Global Understanding](#).*

Miami is an experiment in the future of the US and the wider Americas. Longstanding ethnic and national diversity among peoples of Africa and African descent in South Florida makes it indexical for changing national, hemispheric and global demographics. The City of Miami and its environs, therefore, provide us a very rich ‘field’ to practice *seeing* (for example, like an anthropologist/ethnographer, or a cultural critic, or an architect, or an epidemiologist...), as we engage various local communities and disciplinary expertise. This course will focus on social-cultural, spatial, aesthetic and historical factors that have created contemporary Black Miami--an important yet understudied crossroad of the US south and the global south. We will spend the semester identifying, documenting, and ‘mapping’ Black Miami arts and aesthetics, built environment, health, well-being, and community capacity.

We intend to create a community of scholars. Students will be introduced to research disciplines (social scientific, bench science, journalistic, ethnographic, archival, literary, artistic) and asked to think about the differences among disciplinary methods and outcomes. Through engaging interdisciplinary works and assignments, weekly lectures from subject area specialists, students will participate in the creation and nurturing of new knowledge and generative linkages between the university, local and global Black Miami institutions, communities and discourses. Through this critical engagement with subject area specialists, students will learn how to compose their (research) questions and why they chose whatever method(s) to answer the question. Students will also be (1) Introduced to Black Miami (2) thereby sketching or inaugurating a Black Miami Studies and (3) while getting to know Black faculty across the campuses.

The course adapts a critical workshop style that raises productive questions--discussing theory, methods, close readings, occasional short in-class writing as well as longer form writings based on following projects: (1) Ethnography of a local Black Miami neighborhood or community organization; and (2) Oral history of a Black Miami resident or community organization.

Co-Listed with ENG395 and AAS 360

AMS 323 Topics in American Studies: Politics

“AMERICAN PRESIDENCY”

Instructor: Dr. Arthur Simon

H - LEC (6703): MW 3:35-4:50

Dooly Memorial 100

Course Description: This class examines the development and power of the modern presidency. It includes historic development of the presidency, sources of the power for modern Presidents, roles of the modern President, institutional decision-making, how and to what degree presidential power should be controlled, the process for selecting Presidents, the President’s relationship with the public, the media, Congress and the Supreme Court, the President’s role in public policymaking, important Presidents and presidential elections. *Individualized People & Society Cognate*

Co-listed with POL 315

AMS 323 Topics in American Studies: Politics

“U.S. Defense Policy”

Instructor: Dr. June Teufel Dreyer

Section O: T/Thu 9:30- 10:45:05-7:50

Dooley Memorial 102

Course Description: This course examines key problems of national security in the post-Cold War/post 9 11 environment. Of particular concern will be the structure and functioning of the US defense establishment and its interactions with those of its most probable adversaries and allies. Readings and lectures will acquaint students with the constraints on, and options open to, policy planners, and with the institutional elements of the decision-making process.

Learning Objectives: by the end of this course, the student should have learned to

- describe the framework within which US defense policy is formulated
- show familiarity with major strategic thinkers from Sun Zi to the present
- understand how the defense budget is calculated and allocated
- be familiar with the principles of strategic arms control and disarmament
- outline the parameters of military recruitment
- know the advantages and disadvantages of military contractors
- discuss recent technological innovations and their relevance to modern warfare

Co-listed with POL 349

AMS 323 Topics in American Studies: Politics

Section 1T: “The Election”

Instructor: Dr. Joseph Ucsinski, Casey Klofstad, Fernand Armandi

Tues 5:05-7:50

Whitten LC 130

Course Description: In a democracy, the actions of the government are based on the wishes of the citizenry. We will examine the vital role that elections play in in this process, specifically focusing on the issues and events surrounding the on-going elections. The course will explore the 2024 local, state, and national elections, examining the journalists, strategists, and candidates involved. Each week will feature a big-name guest speaker, often a congressperson, candidate, commentator, or campaign manager. The course will also host debate and election night watch parties.

Co-listed with POL 401

AMS 324 Topics in American Studies: Religion

Sec: Q LEC “Religion in the US”

Instructor: Dr. David Kling

T/TH 12:30-1:45

Flipse 401

Course description: This course introduces the history, themes, and issues in American religion from the pre-colonial period to the present. It is divided into two sections. The first provides a historical overview and an introduction to some of the religions that have been most prominent—Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism—as well as the traditions that are native to the land. The second section considers some “non-traditional” religions (so-called “cults,” Eastern religions) as well as religio-ethnic expressions of religion (Nation of Islam, African American).

Co-list Rel 131

AMS 326: Topics in American Studies - Education

“Psychosocial Change and Well-being”

Instructor: Dr. Todd Warner

Section RLEC: T/Th 2am-3:15pm

Dooly Memorial 102

Course Description: Introduction to personal and interpersonal approaches to well-being. Includes theoretical, historical, philosophical, and psychological bases of well-being. Emphasis will be placed on real-life applications of theory and practice to the promotion of psychosocial change and well-being.

Co-listed with EPS 201

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AMS 326: Topics in American Studies - Education

“Community Psychology and Development”

Instructor: Dr. Todd Warner

Section P: T/Th 11:00pm-12:15pm

Mahoney Pearson Comm116

Course Description: Community psychology is about the prevention of psychosocial problems and the promotion of mental health and well-being through the creation of equitable and just social settings, neighborhoods, communities, and societies. Course topics include: stress and social support; oppression and human diversity; primary prevention, social intervention and health promotion; self-help; mediating structures; community mental health; alternative settings; community development and social change.

Co-Listed with EPS 361

AMS 327 Topics in American Studies: Film

“TV and American Culture”

Instructor: Alfred Martin

4J - LEC (7275) Wed 5:05-7:50

Allen Hall 204

Course Description: TV History examines U.S. television and streaming video in historical perspective, not only as industries, but as institutions of cultural identity.
Pre-Requisite CCA 103

Co-listed with CC310

AMS 327 Topics in American Studies: Film

Special Topics Cinematic Arts: “Forgotten Classics: The Best Hollywood Films from the 1970s-2000s You Haven't Seen”

Instructor: René Rodríguez

5U Thu 6:35-9:20

Dooly Memorial 225

Course Description: This course will revisit movies of all genres released from the 1970s to the present that didn't get their proper due at the time of their release but are now considered modest/major masterpieces. We will put the films into context and explain what was happening in American pop culture/social-economic trends that will help explain why the films failed at the box office.

Co-listed with CCA 394

AMS 327 Topics in American Studies: Film

“Queer Media Studies”

1T Instructor: Alfred Martin

Tu 5:05pm - 7:50pm

Allen Hall 204

Course Description: Examines the history and development of U.S. LGBT media by focusing on media production, sociocultural context, media reception, texts.

Co-listed with CCA 417

AMS 327 Topics in American Studies: Film

Special Topics Cinematic Arts: “Global Black Film”

1T Instructor: Terri Francis

4J - LEC (7190)Wed 5:05pm - 7:50pm

Dooly Memorial 114

Requisite: Sophomore Status And Cumulative GPA 2.5.

Co-listed with CCA 494

AMS 332 Topics in American Studies: Anthropology

“Medicine and Health Care”

Instructor: Dr. Toni Cela

Y - DIL (3590): Online Instruction

Course Description: The class examines the sociocultural and historical foundations of Global Health through an anthropological lens. It analyzes major global health challenges, programs and policies. Students are introduced to emerging global health priorities, social and cultural determinants of health and vulnerability to diseases and human insecurity. It compares health

systems across countries and cultures and evaluates access and utilization of health services. Finally, it assesses key community-based and global initiatives, and identifies resources for learning and career opportunities in global health. **Components: Distance Learning Required**

Co-listed with APY 205

AMS 332: Topics in American Studies – Anthropology

“Sex and Culture”

Instructor: Claire Oueslati

S - LEC (3556): T/Thurs: 3:30-4:45

Dooly Memorial 201

Course Description: This course explores human sexuality from an anthropological point of view. Students taking the course will examine how anthropologists, especially feminist and queer anthropologists, research, theorize and challenge knowledge of sex in relation to class, gender, sexuality, nationality, race, ethnicity, economy, and more. The course includes examinations of the biology of human sexuality, the cultural dynamics of sexual activity and expression (from virginity pledges to BDSM communities), asexualities, sexual forms of social control, sexual violence, economies of sexual exchange including sex work, and contemporary upsets to the conventional study of the anthropology of sexuality.

Co-listed with APY 392

AMS 332 Topics in American Studies: Anthropology

HI-LEC (3593) “The Anthropology of Kinship and Family in America”

Instructor: Dr. Louis Marcelin

MW 3:35-4:50 Merrick 101

Course Description: This course will introduce students to classic and contemporary social anthropological theories of kinship, marriage, and the family. We will examine how the dynamic of “global cities” and the circulation of people, ideas, and goods generate new modalities and patterns of kinship networks and the construction of individuals and groups. Our ethnographic materials will be primarily drawn from the Americas and the Caribbean, although we will draw comparisons from other regions worldwide. Structural changes and continuities within family configurations will be critically evaluated in their intersections with race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and regulatory mechanisms by states and other institutions. We will also address issues associated with alternative reproductive technologies and transforming roles and identities within the domestic domain.

Co-listed with APY 399

AMS 335 Topics in American Studies: Gender

“Theater and Women in the Americas in the 20th and 21st century”

Instructors: Dr. Lillian Manzor & Marcia Fanti Negri

P - LEC (6420): Merrick 204
T/Th 11:00-12:15pm

Course description: This course provides an overview of women in theater as a cultural expression across the Americas. From a hemispheric perspective, the course explores the relationship between theater and society, exploring aspects of dramatic genre and theatrical representation. In this course we will examine modern and contemporary participation and representations of women in theater, giving special attention to the intersection of gender, race, and social class among the genre of theater in the Americas. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to experience live performance in Miami through field trips and meet theater artists in person and via zoom. This course aims to foster critical thinking and research through archives, such as the Cuban Theater Digital Archive; the Cuban Heritage Collection, the Leila Miccolis Collection, and Special Collections at Richter Library, among others. By the end of this course students will be able to talk about theater as a literary genre and a cultural expression making comparisons between different cultural formations in the Americas and critically addressing the intersections between gender, race, and social class. (This course is colisted with LAS 301 and SPA 310.)

Co-listed with SPA 310 & LAS 301

AMS 401 Seminar in American Studies: Literature
“American Literature 1915-1945”

Instructor: Dr. Joel Nickels

Sec E: MWF 12:20-1:10pm, Dooly Memorial 207

Course Description: In this class, we'll share Robert Frost's surprise at seeing a telephone pole in the middle of the forest: "'You here?' I said. 'Where aren't you nowadays?'" We'll journey with Mina Loy through New York crowds, which look to her like an "ocean in flower / of closing hour." We'll hear Langston Hughes' metaphysical laughter, "Shaking the lights in the fish joints, / Rolling white balls in the pool rooms." And we'll camp out with Hemingway beside "Big Two-Hearted River." The point of this class will be to encounter early twentieth-century literature as a force that moves and inspires us. There will be no tests or quizzes in this class. Instead, I'll ask you to write short reflections on what you've read and to write two essays. I'm eager to hear your thoughts and feelings about these magnificent authors! I'll walk you through the hard parts to help you build confidence in your interpretive skills. We'll be reading authors such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, e. e. cummings, Countee Cullen, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Langston Hughes, Léonie Adams, Jean Toomer, Mina Loy, Anne Spencer, Richard Wilbur, Robert Hayden and Mark Van Doren

Co-listed with ENG 484

AMS 499 Independent Study

Instructor: Dr. Christine Arce

Section 01: ARRANGED

AMS 501 Senior Project

Instructor: Dr. Christine Arce
Section 01: ARRANGED

AMS 505 Senior Honors Thesis

Instructor: Dr. Christine Arce
Section 01: ARRANGED