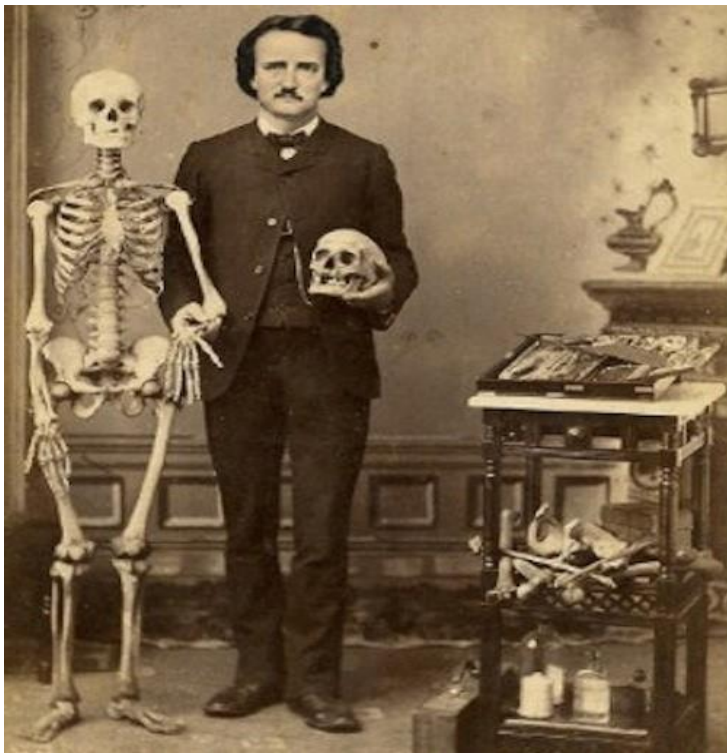


# American Studies

## Spring 2025

### 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.
- 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.

**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, and should research on their own which institution they prefer. The internship should align with

research interest in courses that have student has taken in AMS, and should be approved by 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**). Five electives (300 level or higher).

For an advising appointment, please contact the Program Director.

## Spring 2025

### **AMS 101- Intro to American Studies**

**Course Title: "Forming Identities in American Culture"**

**Instructor: Aldo Regalado**

**aregalado@miami.edu**

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

**Dooly Memorial 209**

*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 301-R Topics in American Studies**

**Course Title: "I, Too, Sing America:" First-Person Black Narratives In The U.S.A."**

**Gabriel Das Chagas**

**gxd574@miami.edu**

**Section R: TTH 2-3:15pm**

**Allen Hall 209**

*Course Description:* From an interdisciplinary and decolonial perspective, "I, too, sing America" focuses on first-person Black narratives in the United States from the 18th to the 21st century. This class investigates the rich tapestry of African American experience through literary works, songs, films, and visual art spanning from the colonial era to contemporary times. Students will explore seminal works, including slave narratives like Frederick Douglass' account, to Harlem Renaissance masterpieces by Langston Hughes and Claude McKay. Students will also learn about pivotal moments in U.S. history, from Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement, examining powerful voices such as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Audre Lorde, and Maya Angelou. Exploring the relationship between Blackness and subjectivity, we will delve into the complexities of identity, resistance, and social justice, while also celebrating the diversity of voices within African American literature. Finally, we also engage with contemporary Black artist from Miami to discuss their connections to the local community, considering the multicultural atmosphere of the city. Through critical analysis of those works, students will be able to gain a deeper understanding of the enduring relevance of Black first-person narratives and their cultural impact in the U.S. and around the world.

### **AMS 310 The US, Transnationalism, and Globalization**

**Course Title: “United States Culture in a Global Framework: The American Dream”**

**Instructor: Dr. Lorella di Gregorio**

**lorella@miami.edu**

**Section Q: TTh 12:30-1:45pm**

**Dooley Memorial 213**

**Course Description:**

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the development of U.S. culture through the lens of immigration and its intersections with global processes. It examines the ways in which immigration has shaped American society, culture, and identity over time, as well as the reciprocal relationship between the U.S. and the global community through migratory flows. The course will analyze the historical roots of immigration, the diverse experiences of immigrant groups, and the cultural, political, and economic contributions of immigrants to the United States. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the course draws on history, sociology, political science, and cultural studies to critically examine how immigration has both shaped and been shaped by the global dynamics that influence the United States. Students will engage with a range of primary and secondary sources, including historical documents, personal narratives, policy debates, and media representations, to develop a comprehensive understanding of the cultural interplay between the U.S. and the world through immigration.

*Individualized Arts & Humanities Cognate Individualized People & Society Cognate*

**AMS 322-B Topics in American Studies: Literature**

**Course Title: “Black Feminist Geographies”**

**Instructor: Dr. Donette Francis**

**daf@miami.edu**

**Section B2 MWF 9:05-9:55 am (Dooley 102) & Section 4G, W 2:30-5:15 pm (Merrick 306)**

**Course Description:** This course offers an introduction to classic and recent Black feminist scholarship that examines the relationship between race, space, place, and power. Black women writers have a long history of theorizing the politics of placemaking. Their commitment to rendering the nuances of place comes from an understanding that space is produced to mark difference, which therefore creates structures of belonging or unbelonging. We will study how these writers map: the colony, the metropole, and plantation Americas as well as the rural, urban and suburban. Throughout our readings and film screenings, we will ask how the intersection of race, genders, sexualities and class shape experiences various geographic sites within and beyond the United States. Students will engage in “literary fieldwork” of various cultural sites in Miami and share findings with the class.

Texts include:

bell hooks, “Homeplace as site of resistance,” 1990

Sylvia Wynter, “Novel and History, Plot and Plantation,” 1971

Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*, 1994

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography," 2002

Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," 2011

Camilla Hawthorne & Jovan Scott Lewis, "Black Geographies: Material Praxis of Black Life and Study," 2023

Creative Texts:

Ann Petry, *The Street*, 1946, Harlem

Merle Hodge, *Crick, Crack, Monkey*, 1970, Trinidad

Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maude Martha*, 1953, Chicago

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun (1961)* Chicago

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* or *Sula*, Midwest

Andrea Levy, *Small Island (2-part BBC Series)*, 2009, England

City Girls, "Twerk" featuring Cardi B, 2019, Miami

Juana Valdes, *My Inheritance: Las Chancelates de Cecilia Valdes (Cuba/Miami)* (An art installation), 1994

*Co-listed with ENG 210-B2/AAS 290/AMS 322/GSS 360 (combined class) Satisfies the English literature major and minor requirement for a course in [Diversity and Global Understanding](#).*

### **AMS 322 Topics in American Studies: English**

**Course Title: "Banned Books"**

**Section O: TR 9:30-10:45 am**

**John Funchion**

**[jfunchion@miami.edu](mailto:jfunchion@miami.edu)**

**Wolfson 2040**



**Course Description:** Censorship and the suppression of books preceded the founding of the United States with Britain's "seditious libel" laws that led to the suppression of revolutionary material such as Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*. As the new U.S. republic took shape, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson promoted the founding of libraries and universities in no small part because they believed the free circulation of ideas was crucial to the health of a democracy. U.S. literary history, however, is marred by periods of censorship, repression, and book banning and burning. In this introductory literary course, we will examine various eras of censorship from the 1770s to the 1960s. The course will be divided into a series of short units organized around milestones in literary censorship and free speech such as the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, the suppression of abolitionist texts in the Confederate States of America in the 1860s, the Comstock Acts of 1873, the McCarthy Era of the 1950s, and the Berkeley Free Speech Movement of the 1960s. We will also closely examine the 1964 *Grove Press, Inc. v. Gerstein* case because it ruled that Miami-Dade County could not ban *The Tropic of Cancer* following the standards laid out by *Roth v. United States* (1957). We will first look at the laws themselves and then read one literary work or excerpt suppressed during these corresponding eras. Authors may include Paine, Philip Freneau, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Walt Whitman, Theodore Dreiser, Kate Chopin, Jack

London, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Henry Miller, Kurt Vonnegut, or Toni Morrison. Throughout the course, we will return to a series of big questions that have remained profoundly important in U.S. literary culture that address how books have sustained and reinvigorated the U.S. political project. We will also discuss how printers, publishers, independent booksellers, librarians, and university students have historically helped to protect free speech in the U.S. Writing assignments will consist of several short essays that invite students to reflect on their own reading practices, and one final paper on a banned book of the student's choice.

*Co-listed with ENG 210*

**AMS 322 Topics in American Studies: English**

**Course Title: “Edgar Allan Poe And The U.S. Gothic”**

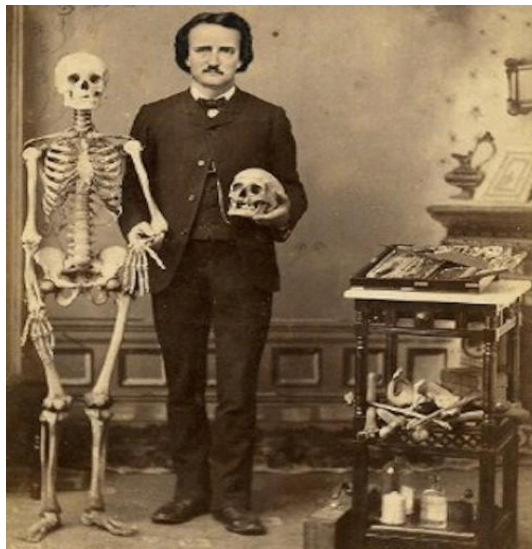
**Section S: TR 3:30-4:45 am**

**John Funchion**

**[jfuncion@miami.edu](mailto:jfuncion@miami.edu)**

**Merrick 322**

**Course Description:** Edgar Allan Poe has remained a fixture of popular American culture since the nineteenth century. The circulation of his stories coincided with the rise of a new form of mass media: the periodical. Fittingly, Poe surfaces in the mass media of our own age, as evidenced by allusions to his work in TV procedurals such as *Blacklist*. He also aesthetically inspires anthology series such as *Black Mirror* and filmmakers such as Jordan Peele. Yet Poe’s place in American literary history is vexed. In the early twentieth century, a respected intellectual historian, V.L. Parrington, declared that “so much only need be said” about Poe because his work “lies outside the main current of American thought.” Conversely, Toni Morrison noted that



“no early American writer is more important to the concept of American Africanism than Poe” because his work controversially revolves around the terror of blackness. Across the Atlantic, on the other hand, French writers and intellectuals from Charles Baudelaire to Jacques Derrida have long displayed an infatuation with his work. This course will invite you to revisit these many readings of Poe and to explore your own interpretations of his work and many subsequent artists who embraced and challenged his work. In addition to reading poetry, short stories, and novels, we will also consider how Poe’s work surfaces in TV serials, films, and boardgames.

*Co-listed with Eng 345*



**AMS 323 Topics in American Studies: Politics**

**“U.S. Defense Policy”**

**Instructor: Dr. June Teufel Dreyer**

**jdreyer@miami.edu**

**Section CD: 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 332: Topics in American Studies – Anthropology**

**“Sex and Culture”**

**Instructor: Claire Oueslati**

**cxo185@miami.edu**

**Section S: 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 337 Topics in American Studies – Cultural Studies**

**“Sound and Identity in Mexico and the Caribbean”**

**Section T: T/Th 5:00PM-6:15PM**

**[yjm13@miami.edu](mailto:yjm13@miami.edu)**



**Course Description:** We are used to drawing a link between visuals and identity: we often point at flags, skin color, and clothing to explain who we are. But much less thought has been given to the relationship between *sound* and identity. What is the relationship of music(s), language(s), accent(s), everyday sounds and noise to identity?

This course asks these questions about Mexican and Caribbean peoples over the past one hundred years, both at home and abroad. What do their musics, languages, accents, and reproduced sounds—everything from the call of a unique frog to police sirens to moans—tell us about their identities? With respect to the recorded songs, folkloric traditions, noise regulations, and performed poems of these regions and time period that we will study, this course asks you to think about the link between the sounds you hear—or don’t—and the identities expressed.

The knowledge you will generate in this course through sound—called “acoustemology” by ethnomusicologist Steven Feld—will help you approach these communities on their own auditive terms; it will also give you a new angle from which to approach topics common to (Latin) American Studies (*mestizaje*, colonialism, *négritude*) that you likely have already studied from a visualist perspective. As we listen to the past hundred years across these regions, we will ask questions like the following: how did the combination of *rumba* and poetry lead Cubans to think of themselves as a “biracial” nation? How does the fact that reggaeton—a music mainly identified with Spanish and Puerto Rico—began its journey in Jamaica affect Puerto Rican identity? What do the accents and grammar in Selena’s or La Goony Chonga’s music tell us about Mexican- and Cuban-Americans? In short, what can we learn about all of these identities through *sound*? At the end of the course, not only will you have a stronger auditive, conceptual, and historical knowledge about Mexican and Caribbean peoples, you will have also reflected upon your own identity through sound, whether or not you belong to one of these groups. All are welcome, and all discussions and work will be conducted in English (via translation where necessary).

*Co-listed with LAS 301, MLL 360, INS 310*

**AMS 401 Seminar in American Studies: Literature**

**Course Title: “American Literature, 1915-1945”**

**Instructor: Dr. Joel Nickels**

**Section P, TR 11:00 am-12:15 pm**

**Dooly Memorial 208**

**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