

# American Studies Fall 2025

## Course Booklet



#NoDAPL protests 2016. Photo: Rob Wilson

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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 an Honors Thesis.

**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.

# Fall 2025

## AMS 101- Intro to American Studies

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

**Instructor: Aldo Regalado**

**aregalado@miami.edu**

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

**Dooly Memorial 215**

**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- Topics in American Studies

**Course Title: "Indigenous Environmental Justice: From Standing Rock to the Amazon"**

**Instructor: Lourdes Schmader**

**les231@miami.edu**

**Section P: T-TH 11:00 am – 12:15 pm**

**Whitten LC 184**



#NoDAPL protests 2016. Photo: Rob Wilson

**Course Description:** Through a comparative, interdisciplinary approach grounded in decolonial thought and Indigenous epistemologies, this course explores how Indigenous communities in the United States, Brazil, and Ecuador confront environmental exploitation while advancing cultural and ecological sovereignty. Engaging political declarations, community narratives, oral histories, and multimedia storytelling, students encounter diverse ways of knowing that frame land not as resource, but as relative. The course challenges Western paradigms of resistance and knowledge production, inviting critical reflection on positionality, accountability, and the lessons of Indigenous-led movements for sovereignty and ecological justice.

Key case studies include: the 2016 Standing Rock movement, led by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, a historian and water protector who founded the first resistance camp against the Dakota Access Pipeline; the Mariana and Brumadinho dam disasters in Brazil, analyzed through the work of Ailton Krenak, an Indigenous philosopher from the Krenak people, whose critique of extractivism and the myth of progress resonates globally; and grassroots organizing in Ecuador, where Andean-Amazonian cosmovisions such as *sumak kawsay* (Good Living) and *kawsak sachá* (Living

Forest) inform the 2013 *Kawsak Sacha* Declaration by the Sarayaku Kichwa community and the Colectivo Mujeres Amazónicas Defensoras de la Selva.

The course foregrounds the leadership of Indigenous women across the Americas. LaDonna Brave Bull Allard catalyzed a global water protection movement at Standing Rock. Sonia Guajajara of the Guajajara people, a veteran land defender and Brazil's current Minister of Indigenous Peoples, became the first Indigenous woman to hold this national post. In Ecuador, Patricia Gualinga of the Sarayaku Kichwa community is internationally recognized for her environmental advocacy and legal defense of Indigenous territory. Their work exemplifies how Indigenous women sustain movements for justice and cultivate transnational solidarities.

As an entry point to American Studies, the course integrates accessible readings, film screenings, and class discussions to examine cultural survival, environmental justice, and Indigenous visions for sustainable futures. Students will also engage with rare documents, maps, and contemporary artworks through visits to Special Collections and the Kislak Gallery, fostering deeper connections to Indigenous worldviews, environmental resistance, and cross-border alliances.

### **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 O: TTh 9:30-10:45am**

**Allen Hall 106**

#### ***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 321 Topics in American Studies: Literature**

**Course Title: American Beginnings**

**Instructor: Dr. Ashli White**

**acwhite@miami.edu**

**Section C MWF 10:10-11:00 am**

**Whitten LC 190**

**Course Description:** When and how did America become “America”? This course explores this question through a multi-faceted appraisal of the colonization of North America. We focus on the late sixteenth through the mid-eighteenth centuries, an era that was marked by discord and adaptation, as Native peoples, Africans, and Europeans from diverse nations interacted to make “America.” Throughout the semester, we will pay particular attention to the consequences of this colonial enterprise, and we will consider why this historical moment and its legacies continue to resonate so powerfully in the United States today.

*Co-listed with HIS 361*

**AMS 321 Topics in American Studies: History**

**Course Title: “Revolution, Nation, Empire: The History of the Cold War in the Americas.”**

**Instructor: Dr. Eduardo Elena**

**edelena@miami.edu**

**Section R TR 2:00-3:15 pm**

**Dooly Memorial 202**

**Course Description:** Although the Cold War is commonly thought of as a bloodless standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union, it was a period of violently “hot” conflict throughout much of the world. In the Americas, the Cold War brought great social upheaval and political turmoil. Focusing on the period from the late 1940s to the 1990s, this course will examine the origins, evolution, and enduring consequences of the Cold War in this region. The lectures and readings explore key issues such as the emergence of new nationalist currents, the impact of U.S. intervention, competing visions of revolution and counter-revolution, and shifting definitions of democracy. In exploring U.S. and Latin American relations, we will focus attention several case studies: among them, Guatemala, Cuba, Chile, Argentina, and El Salvador. The emphasis throughout will be on balancing an appreciation for the domestic dynamics and international forces behind Cold War conflicts.

Through weekly assignments, students will hone their talents for historical interpretation, including their thinking and writing skills. The course provides tools for understanding present-day controversies in the Americas – including those concerning human rights, development, inequality, and migration – from a broader historical perspective.

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

**Course Title: “Theory, History, and U.S. Novels”**

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

**Instructor: Dr. John Funchion**

**jfuncion@miami.edu**

**Dooly Memorial 114**

**Course Description:** From historical adventure sagas to students plotting murder, four significant novels belonging to different genres and various historical periods provide the foundation for this course on the history of the novel. These texts will assist us in charting the development of this important literary form in the United States. Alongside these texts, we will read literary criticism and theory that has shaped our understanding of the novel. Texts will include work by Frances Harper, Theodore Dreiser, Leslie Marmon Silko, and William Gibson. Students will learn about

the history of the novel by reading excerpts from scholarly books and learning key concepts used in narrative studies and theory today. We also consider how narrative theory might still be applied to contemporary visual media and contemplate the future of the novel in our digital age.

*Co-listed with ENG 340*

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

**Instructor TBA**

**Section GH: MW 2:30-3:45 am**

**Lakeside Village 1090**

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

**Course Title: Black Miami Studies**

**Instructor: Dr. Terri Francis**

**Tsf17@miami.edu**

**Section 1J: TR 5:05-7:50 pm**

**Allen Hall 105**

**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.

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

**“U.S. Defense Policy”**

**Instructor: Dr. June Teufel Dreyer**

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

**Section CD: MW/ 10:10- 11:25 am**

**Dooley Memorial 101**

***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 American Studies: Topics in Politics**

**Course Title: “American Presidency”**

**Instructor: Dr. Arthur Simon**

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

**Section CD: MW 3:35- 4:50 am**

**Dooly Memorial 100**

***Course Description:*** The class examines the development and power of the modern Presidency. This includes the process for selecting Presidents, the historical development of the Presidency, the President’s relationship with the public, the media, and Congress, and the President’s role in public policymaking.

*Co-listed with POL 315*

**AMS 324 Topics in American Studies: Religion**

**Course Title: “Spiritual, Not Religious: Spirituality in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”**

**Instructor: Dr. Catherine Newell**

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

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

**Allen Hall 105**



**Course Description:** In “Spiritual, Not Religious” we will examine the spiritual outlets and the fabric of religious life in the 21st century; we will explore such spiritual phenomena as the New Age movement, the rise of yoga as a spiritual practice, the growth of the self-help phenomenon, the influence of spiritually-oriented figures like Oprah on modern spirituality, and the adaptation of religious practice to spiritual seeking.

*Co-listed with REL 250*

**AMS 324: Topics in Religious Studies**

**Course Title: “Religion in America”**

**Instructor: Dr. David Kling**

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

**Ashe Admin 523**

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

**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 three 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 and third sections consider some “non-traditional” religions as well as a wide range of topics. Most of them concern the relation between religion and some other theme or dimension of American life—politics, culture, race, violence, etc.

*Co-listed with REL 131*

**AMS 324: Topics in Religious Studies**

**Course Title: “Jewish Civilization and Intro to Judaism, Jews, and Jewishness from Abraham to Wonder Woman**

**Instructor: Henry Green**

**Section 0: TR 9:30-10:45**

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

**Dooly Memorial 116**

*Co-listed with REL 231*

**AMS 324 Topics in American Studies: Religious Studies**

**Course Title: “Religious Issues in Death and Dying”**

**Instructor: Robyn Walsh**

**Section 5P: Thurs 11:00-1:45pm**

**[rxw159@miami.edu](mailto:rxw159@miami.edu)**

**Lowe Art Museum 118**

**Course Description:** For as long as we have documented history on the subject, human beings have debated issues about what it means to be mortal, what it means to live well, how to die well, and whether death is truly the end of life. This course surveys discourses about death and death rituals from

the ancient Mediterranean (ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome) to the present day. Some of the issues we will discuss include (but are not limited to): the history of certain perspectives on illness, death, and burial; the relationship between organized religious systems and death and dying; personhood; theodicy; euthanasia; and the afterlife.

*Co-listed with REL 351*

**AMS 326 Topics in American Studies: Education**

**Course Title: “Community Psychology and Development”**

**Instructor: Dr. Todd Warner**

**t.warner@miami.edu**

**Section P: TR 11:00-12:15**

**Dooly Memorial 102**

**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 326 Topics in American Studies: Education**

**Course Title: “Psychosocial Change and Well-being.”**

**Instructor: Dr. Todd Warner**

**t.warner@miami.edu**

**Section P: TR 2-3:15**

**Dooly Memorial 312**

**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*

**AMS 327 Topics in American Studies: Cinema**

**Course Title: “TV and American Culture”**

**Instructor: Dr. Alfred Martin**

**alm885@miami.edu**

**Section 1P: T 11:-1:40pm**

**Dooly Memorial 116**

**Course description:** TV and American Culture examines U.S. television and streaming video in historical perspective, not only as industries, but as institutions of cultural identity.

*Co-listed with CCA 310*

**AMS 327 Topics in American Studies: Cinema**

**Course Title: Blackness and American Television**

**Instructor: Dr. Alfred Martin**

**[alm885@miami.edu](mailto:alm885@miami.edu)**

**Section 1T: T 5:05-7:50**

**Wolfson 3034**

*Course description:* Examines the sites of production, reception, representation, and industry as related to black televisual images from the 1950s to today.

*Co-listed with CCA 414*

**AMS 327 Topics in American Studies: Cinema**

**Course Title: Queer Media Studies**

**Instructor: Dr. Anthony Allegro**

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

**Section 4J: T 5:05-7:50**

**Allen Hall 210**

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

*Co-listed with CCA 417*

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

**Course Title: "American Literature, 1915-1945"**

**Instructor: Dr. Joel Nickels**

**Section E : MWF 12:20 am-1:10 pm**

**Dooly Memorial 100**

*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