

UNIVERSITY
OF MIAMI



American Studies

Fall 2016



Interdisciplinary Studies

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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 United States in the World.
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. 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 United States in the World
 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 2016

AMS 101- Introduction to American Studies

Global Cities in the United States

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

Instructor: Marta Gierczyk

The purpose of this course is to explore significant issues in American cities in a global frame. Topics will include immigration, race, social activism, practices of urban renewal and anti-gentrification movements. Pursuing transnational connections, we will discuss the changing cultural and ethnic fabric of America's global cities: Miami, New York, San Francisco, and Washington DC. Our multidisciplinary approach will draw from popular cultural representations as well as history, literature, film, and photography. By engaging with theories and practices of local and digital activist communities, we will develop a specialized vocabulary for explaining how issues of race, opportunity, and metropolitan space are connected. In what ways do cities figure as a locus of multiethnic experience? Students will also engage with the city around them, to consider local examples of cultural and political expression.

AMS 301- Topic in American Studies

Art of the Con: Con Artists, Tricksters, and Card Sharks in U.S. Literature and Culture

Section Q1: TuTh 12:30pm-1:45pm

Instructor: John Funchion

In an era rife with financial fraud, identity theft, and political graft, why do we celebrate the exploits of scam artists in recent films and TV series such *Blacklist*, *Catch Me if You Can*, *Focus*, *Oceans 11*, or *The Wolf of Wall Street*? Why are we so afraid of getting “fleeced” and yet so enchanted by those who do the fleecing? Why have con artists and tricksters always played such central roles in American literature and culture? Why does the word “confidence” seem to bear so many contradictory positive and negative meanings? What is the relationship between confidence and trust, confidence and faith, or confidence and success? To address these questions and others in this course, we will explore the concept of confidence in literary texts, works of literary and cultural theory and films that deal with economics, gender, ethnicity, aesthetics, and “Americanness” in American literature. As we consider some of these important questions, you will work at refining your reading practices, perfecting your prose, and crafting your critical responses to complicated cultural and literary problems. We will study depictions of con artists and tricksters in a variety of short stories, novels, films, and TV serials.

Co-Listed with ENG 241

AMS 321- Topic in American Studies- History

Contemporary America: Mass Media and The Modern Presidency

Section Q: TuTh 12:30pm-1:45pm

Instructor: Gregory Bush

Summary: From the divisive election of 1896 to the present, this course will examine the development of modern American presidential campaigns and the evolution of mass media. We will examine major issues of wartime propaganda, the changing nature of attention engineering (often called public relations), civil rights and social policy. Leading personalities, political parties, campaign finance, celebrities, and crowd psychology all congealed over time to create the strange politics we experience today. Short papers and class powerpoints will be required. The key text will be David Greenberg, *Republic of Spin: An inside History of the American Presidency* (2016).

Co-Listed with HIS 367

AMS 322- Topic in American Studies- Literature

Literary Themes and Topics: Contemporary American Migrations

Section Q: TuTh 12:30pm-1:45pm

Instructor: Donette Francis

What does it mean to say “America is a nation of immigrants?” As a literary form, the American immigrant narrative describes the process of migration, Americanization and (un)settlement. How do authors portray immigrant experiences? Which stories are privileged and which silenced? Centering on Miami and the state of Florida, we will read and watch narratives of American immigration, attending to how race, gender, class and sexuality as well as the changing character and policies of place have shaped immigrant experiences. In addition, we will explore the following questions: Is ethnicity in opposition to Americanness? How is identity transformed by migration? How and why is home remembered? Finally, what are the constitutive tropes of American immigrant fiction, and what narrative strategies are deployed to tell these stories?

This semester we will use the city of Miami as our lab for tracking a dynamic American immigrant city. Going beyond the ready characterization of Miami as a “Latin City,” we will explore distinctions among the various “Latin” populations within the city as well as consider non-Latin and Caribbean immigrants, and their respective immigrant enclaves. Assignments include conducting a sight and sound project of an immigrant neighborhood as well as writing an immigrant narrative of either yourself or a Miami-based immigrant.

Texts: Rosalie Turner, *Freedom Bound*; Iris Gomez, *Try to Remember*; Jennine Capo Crucet, *How to Leave Hialeah*; Ana Menendez, *In Cuba I was a German Shepherd*; Gustavo Perez Firmat, *Next Year in Cuba*; Edwidge, *Danticat*, *Brother, I’m Dying*; Ruth Behar, *Traveling Heavy: A Memoir in Between Journeys*; Glenn Anderson, “Florida’s Bahamian Connection;” Elizabeth

Aranda, Sallie Hughes, and Elena Sabogal, *Making a Life in Multi-Ethnic Miami: Immigration and the Rise of a Global City*.

Co-Listed with ENG 210 Q

AMS 322- Topic in American Studies- Literature

Literary Themes and Topics: American Literature 1865-1914. Narratives of Financial and Political Upheaval in US Literature

Section R, TuTh: 2:00pm-3:15pm

Instructor: John Funchion

Much like our own time, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were plagued by economic turmoil. With each succeeding financial “panic,” national unrest intensified and the gap between wealthy Robber Barons and day laborers widened. Race riots also broke out in the southern states in response to Jim Crow laws and other forms of racial oppression. During this same period of time, an increasing number of literary works and periodicals sought to either temper or inflame the insurrectionary passions of the period. In this course, we will examine the various ways that late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century US authors responded to these economic and political crises and consider whether literary movements like “realism” and “naturalism” challenged or merely reinforced the economic and social inequities of this era. In addition to reading some short sociological, legal, and political documents, we will read literary works by authors such as Edward Bellamy, Charles Chesnutt, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Charlotte Perkins Gillman, Frances E.W. Harper, Henry James, and Jack London.

Co-listed with ENG 483

AMS 327 – Topic in American Studies- Film

Women, Media, & Popular Culture

Section D: MW 11:15am-12:30pm

Instructor: Kerli Kirch

This course examines gender representation in American film, television, and other media from the perspective of feminist theory and cultural studies. Students explore the many ways that women have been portrayed--and how they have portrayed themselves--within popular culture. It helps to better understand the ways in which Hollywood representation has been shaped by formal systems and institutional forces. In addition, the course considers these issues from the perspective of spectatorship and reception. How images of women (and men) are read, interpreted, and negotiated? What does it mean to shift our emphasis of study from production to reception—and, in some instances, reproduction—and how might we empower ourselves to create media based on our own reception experiences?

AMS 335- Topic in American Studies-Gender

Woman's America I

Section 2E: TuTh 5:00pm-6:15pm

Instructor: Sybil Lipschultz

This course looks at the history of American women from the American Revolution to Reconstruction. We will examine mothers and daughters of the revolution, women and the law of slavery, abolition and women's rights, the first independent women's movement and the legal status of women throughout the period.

There will be three five page papers and weekly reading assignments

Co-listed with HIS 261

AMS 337- Topic in American Studies- Culture

Modern British and American Poetry

Section F: MWF 9:00am-9:55am

Instructor: Robert Casillo

This course introduces the student to some major modern poets and traditions. Rather than being confined to the twentieth century, it will show the relation of modern poetry to a number of poetic themes, ideas, values, and tendencies already evident in the Romantic and Victorian periods in England as well as in America and on the Continent. These will include the cult of Nature and its gradual neutralization (Wordsworth, Hopkins, Hardy, Frost); the rejection of Nature for the primacy of the imagination (Yeats, Stevens); metrical and rhythmic innovation away from the iambic pentameter (Hopkins, Hardy, Pound); the search for a sophisticated, technical, and truly modern as opposed to "poetic" diction (Hopkins, Hardy, Eliot, Pound); the reliance on common speech to introduce texture, tonal complexity, and metrical tension into poetry (Frost, Pound); the turn towards mythologies personal or extrapersonal (Hardy, Yeats, Pound, Eliot); the centrality of the dramatic monologue and its formal permutations from Browning onward (Eliot, Pound); the increasing reliance, beginning with Tennyson, on external objects and landscape in order to objectify inward states (Hardy, Yeats, Eliot, and Pound); the overall drive toward a poetry of sensations and images rather than abstraction, of verbs rather than nouns.

Requirements: Midterm examination, final examination, and a ten-page term paper

Text: *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*

Co-Listed with ENG 341

AMS 337 – Topic in American Studies- Culture
Caribbean History I

Section Q: TuTh 12:30pm-1:45pm

Instructor: Katherine Ramsey

This course will introduce students to major topics, debates, and themes in Caribbean history from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. Areas of focus will include the dynamics of fifteenth-century Amerindian societies; the Columbian “encounter” and Spanish conquest of the Caribbean; piracy in the Spanish Caribbean by the British, French, and Dutch; the establishment by those powers of permanent colonial settlements in the region and the institution of the plantation complex based on the production of sugarcane through the labor of enslaved Africans. We will closely examine histories of slave resistance and rebellion, focusing in particular on the insurrection in the French colony of Saint-Domingue that in 1804 culminated in the founding of Haiti, the second independent nation in the Western hemisphere after the United States. We will explore the shifting ways in which the Caribbean can be defined as a region over the course of these histories, and examine the centrality of the Caribbean to larger world histories of colonialism, capitalism, slavery and emancipation, migration, religious transformation, republicanism, and nation-state formation — in short to the making of the modern world. On two occasions the class will visit the UM Libraries Cuban Heritage Collection and Special Collections to examine and discuss archival resources connected to our studies.

Co-Listed with AAS 290; LAS 301; INS 310; HIS 317

AMS 350 – History and Culture in South Florida
History of Florida: Civic Activism in Modern Miami

Section N: TuTh 8:00am-9:15am

Instructor: Gregory Bush

Summary: From its early days of business activism, to later struggles for civil rights and the environment, Miami has experienced varied forms of civic activism reflecting the changing nature of its power structure and prejudices. This course will feature several focused group research projects, trips, and panel discussions uncovering long forgotten episodes in which individuals became activists and groups formed to combat dominant economic and cultural forces. Issues discussed will include civil rights for African Americans, Hispanics, women and people with disabilities, as well as the recent struggles for public space. The instructor, a longtime activist, will have just published *White Sand Black Beach: Civil Rights, Public Space and Miami’s Virginia Key* (2016) which will be one of the class texts.

Co-Listed with HIS 381

AMS 401 – Seminar in American Studies
Religion, Evolution, and the U.S. Constitution

Section M: M 5:00pm-7:30pm

Instructor: Susan Haack

An interdisciplinary course including topics in history, religion, law, philosophy, and biology: the Religion Clauses of the U.S. constitution, with special focus on the Establishment Clause, and specifically its application to the teaching of evolution in public high schools.

Co-listed with REL 406, PHI 391, BIL 575

AMS 401 – Seminar in American Studies
Studies in United States History: Female Body in the U.S.

Section 48: W 4:30pm-7:00pm

Instructor: Sybil Lipschultz

In this course we will look at various discourses addressing the female body, including such topics as, the cosmetic industry, adolescence, eating disorders, medical advice to women, pregnancy, motherhood, breastfeeding, control of pregnancy, beauty pageants and plastic surgery.

During the semester students will write two book reports on readings outside the regular assignment. There will be one paper at the end of the term.

Co-listed HIS 561, HIS 662, WGS 450

AMS 401 – Seminar in American Studies
The Civil Rights Movement

Section S: TuTh 3:30pm-4:45pm

Instructor: Donald Spivey

This course explores the history of the Civil Rights Movement. We will examine the heightening African-American consciousness and expectations after World War II, the organizational and strategic initiatives of the 1950s and 1960s, the tumultuous confrontations of the period, the leadership personalities and differing ideologies, the civil rights legislation and federal programs enacted, and the continuing opposition to the movement and its gains. Lectures will be supplemented with video documentaries, photographs, news clippings, recorded speeches and music from the instructor's vast collection.