

The University of Miami



SPRING
2015

AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM



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Interdisciplinary Studies | Donette Francis, Director

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 change every semester; its purpose is 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 courses 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.

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

7. 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. The final product will be evaluated by the supervising faculty member and 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 typically 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. Two other courses, including at least one AMS course at the 300 level or above.

For an advising appointment, please contact the Program Director.

The following classes in other departments and programs can count toward the major or minor in American Studies:

Africana Studies: AAS 350

Art History: ARH 134, ARH 233, ARH 323, ARH 345

English: ENG 213, ENG 214, ENG 260, ENG 261, ENG 321, ENG 363, ENG 366, ENG 480, ENG 482, ENG 483, ENG 484, ENG 485, ENG 486, ENG 487

Geography: GEG 252, GEG 520, GEG 552

History: HIS 101, HIS 102, HIS 209, HIS 210, HIS 265, HIS 361, HIS 362, HIS 363, HIS 364, HIS 365, HIS 366, HIS 367, HIS 368, HIS 369, HIS 371, HIS 374, HIS 375, HIS 376, HIS 377, HIS 378, HIS 379, HIS 380, HIS 381, HIS 382, HIS 383, HIS 385, HIS 386, HIS 387, HIS 388, HIS 561, HIS 564, HIS 565, HIS 569

Judaic Studies: JUS 360

Political Science: POL 201, POL 309, POL 313, POL 314, POL 315, POL 322, POL 332, POL 335, POL 345, POL 346, POL 347, POL 348, POL 349, POL 351, POL 352, POL 353, POL 354, POL 360, POL 373, POL 374, POL 528, POL 529, POL 530, POL 536, POL 547, POL 550,

Religious Studies: REL 131, REL 334, REL 336, REL 338, REL 353, REL 361

Sociology: SOC 304, SOC 352, SOC 368, SOC 372, SOC 373, SOC 374, SOC 382, SOC 385, SOC 386, SOC 388

Urban Studies: URB 201

Journalism: CNJ 319

Musicology: MCY 124, MCY 127, MCY 211, MCY 212, MCY 311, MCY 312, MCY 537, MCY 583

American Studies Spring 2015

AMS 101 G — Introduction to American Studies – Roxane Pickens

Course Title: Words That Matter in U.S. Culture

MWF 2:30pm-3:20pm

This course will introduce students to some of the most pressing issues examined by American Studies scholars today by exploring the genealogy of several different keywords. Terms such as *gender*, *globalization*, *technology*, and *work* carry a cluster of embedded values that shape our apprehension of the social world around us. We will devote roughly two weeks to a single concept and any other terms closely associated with it. To understand how these words work, we will discuss journalistic essays, academic articles, fictional works, films, and TV serials that engage them. As we explore these concepts, we will address a number of questions. Why, for example, do some words—such as *freedom*—wield so much political power and yet often seem so vaguely defined? How do certain words invite us to revise our understanding of U.S. culture while others limit our capacity to manage certain social and economic problems? How stable are the meanings behind these words? How easily can these concepts be manipulated? Readings may include work by contemporary fiction writers such as Jonathan Franzen or Toni Morrison; essays by commentators such as David Brooks and Naomi Klein; studies by scholars such as Judith Halberstam and Siva Vaidhyanathan; films such as *Children of Men* and *Urbanized*; and TV serials such as *Homeland* and *The Sopranos*. Students will also have the opportunity to work with a number of electronic tools that enable them to track word frequency and meaning variation over time.

Requirements: This course will largely be discussion driven, so attendance and participation are mandatory. Students will write two short papers and complete a final project. For their final project, each student will select a keyword of their own choosing not covered by the class and outline its genealogy and importance in U.S. culture.

AMS 321 O — Topics in American Studies: History — Greg Bush

Course title: Legacy of FDR and the New Deal

TuTh 9:30am-10:45am

Using a diverse array of historical documents such as film, advertisements, as well as speeches, press accounts, letters, autobiographies, other primary sources and historical interpretations, this course will trace the meaning of the New Deal as it has changed over time. We will parse the meaning of several critical documentaries, feature films, and newsreels as we also examine the politics of perception and the personality of FDR and the fate of the political coalition he built in the nation. Students will write several short papers,

and work within small groups to construct unique PowerPoint/websites with original interpretations derived from the many online sources documenting this period. Key texts will include Wendy Wall, *Inventing the American Way* and Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself*.

Combined with HIS 391-O

AMS 321 R — Topics in American Studies: History — Greg Bush

Course title: American Political History Since 1960

TuTh 2:00pm-3:15pm

The advent of John Kennedy to the Presidency is often seen as a starting point for recent history. This course will try and create a broad context to our times from 1960 to the present by examining the politics, policy developments and modes of memory dispensed through the mass media since 1960- with some backward glances. Students will examine the interplay between consumer culture,, a variety of political advertisements, feature films and TV news coverage, and the rhetoric of politicians as they defined- and avoided – some of the major issues of the recent past. WE will examine issues of foreign policy, wealth and poverty, and the culture wars as well as the changing role of Congress, the Presidency and the courts. From Kennedy and Johnson to Reagan, Clinton, Bush and Obama, we will chart how the partisan division grew into the state we now experience. Students will write short papers and create group PowerPoints, a take home midterm and final exam.

Combined with HIS 271-R

AMS 321 T — Topics in American Studies: History — Donald Spivey

Course title: Make or Break America

TuTh 5:00pm-6:15pm

This hard-hitting survey course focuses on exactly what is promised: “The making and breaking of modern America.” HIS 102 has traditionally been used to acquaint the student with the history of the United States from 1877 to the present. This semester we will do that and far more. We will begin by exploring the components that made modern America and fostered the *American Dream*. Following that, we will engage in a sustained, critical examination of what went wrong as “made in America” became a relic of a bygone era and the middle class continues to decline. Throughout the course, in lectures and discussions, we will dare to wrestle with the fierce urgency of now and the pressing question: Where do we go from here? Grading: Four analytical essays based on required readings. Contribution to class discussion will count. The student may substitute a service-learning project in lieu of two of the essays or for extra credit. More on this option in class. No midterm. A comprehensive final examination.

Combined with HIS 102-T

AMS 322 U — Topics in American Studies: Literature — Aldo Regalado

Course title: Comics in America

TuTh 6:25pm-7:40

This course invites students to explore, examine and otherwise engage the historical development, cultural significance, aesthetic characteristics and cognitive dimensions of sequential art in the United States. The course aims to understand comic strips, comic books and their nineteenth-century precursors as extensions of American print culture more broadly, with emphasis placed on how they engaged (and continue to engage) American notions of race, class, gender and nationalism in the context of an emergent modernity.

Texts may include:

- *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud
- *Watchmen* by David Gibbons and Alan Moore
- *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth* by Chris Ware
- A Boondocks anthology by Aaron McGruder
- *Journalism* by Joe Sacco
- *The Power of Comics* by Randy Duncan

Co-Listed with ENG 210-U

AMS 322 Q — Topics in American Studies: Literature —John Funchion

Course title: ConArtist & Tricksters and Card Sharks in U.S. Literature

TuTh 12:30pm-1:45pm

In an era of 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*, *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 “American-ness” 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.

Prerequisite: ENG 106, or equivalent, must be taken prior to this course, or simultaneously with it

Combined with ENG 210-Q

AMS 323 4U — Topics in American Studies: Politics — Joseph Uscinski

Course title: Conspiracy Theories

Tu 6:25pm-9:05pm

Some people believe the President Obama was born in Indonesia; other people believe that President Bush blew up the Twin Towers. This course examines why people believe in conspiracy theories. The course draws on literature from political science, philosophy, sociology, legal studies, and psychology. The course also involves frequent multi-media presentations. This is a writing intensive course, with writing assignments due each week. A writing credit is available.

Combined with POL 311-4U

AMS 324 79— Topics in American Studies: Religion — David Kling

Course title: American Religion Modern Film

Th 5:00pm-7:40pm

Please contact the Religious Studies Department for more information

Co-Listed with REL 335-79

AMS 325 C— Topics in American Studies: Law — Sybil Lipschultz

Course title: Women's America II

MWF 10:10am-11:00am

This course covers the main themes in American Women's History during the Twentieth Century. The topics we consider will serve students with a general interest in this subject, as well as prepare students who seek a foundation for future classes in the field.

Major questions raised by the course will revolve around the historical context of the following issues: domesticity versus public life; wage earning women; women in reform movements; women at war; childbirth and motherhood; the race and class of gender; gender stereotypes in the mass media; women and public policy.

Readings will focus on both background materials by professional historians, and primary sources depicting the words, perspectives and ideas of the women who lived in various historical times.

There will be two take-home exams.

Combined with HIS 262 And WGS 350

AMS 330 6T — Topics in American Studies: Sociology — Frank Samson

Course title: Sociology of Asian Americans

Th 5:00pm- 7:30pm

Sociological perspectives are employed in the examination of the Historical, Social, Economic, and cultural experiences of Asian Americans in the United States

Combined with SOC 491-6T

AMS 330 O — Topics in American Studies: Sociology — Marvin Dawkins

Course title: The Black Athlete in White America

Tu/Th 9:30am-10:45am

This course examines the impact of racism on sport in the United States with a specific focus on the Black athlete. Drawing upon the literature on race and sport in America, the course takes a historical view of the social context in which black athletes have competed and excelled against tremendous odds, both inside and outside of sport competition. After presenting various sociological concepts and frameworks used in analyzing sport as a microcosm of American society, generally, we use biographical evidence to examine experiences of specific Black athletes in a variety of sports from the antebellum period of slavery in America through the twenty-first century to assess the impact of racism at both individual and institutional levels. Through material presented in lectures, readings, documentary films (shown in-class) and other sources, and by engaging in discussions and individual research and writings, students will acquire an understanding of how race and racism have played a significant role in the treatment of Black athletes in American society.

Combined with SOC 291-O

AMS 334 51 — Topics in American Studies: Ethnic Studies — Belkys Torres

Course title: Introduction to Latino/a Studies

TuTh 9:30am-10:45am

Do all Americans who descend from Spanish-speaking countries have something in common? By what label—Hispanic, Latino, Chicano—should descendants from Latin America or the Caribbean identify? Are Latinos a race, an ethnic group, or neither? This course addresses these concerns while analyzing the competing and complementary theoretical perspectives on the “Latinization” of the United States. Our readings, discussions and assignments will explore how multifaceted groups of people have met the various political, social, cultural and economic complexities of U.S. society.

Grading and Participation

- Class Participation (class discussion, attendance)
- Reading Quizzes

- Discussion Questions
- Group Presentation
- Mid-Term Exam
- Final Research Paper

Co-Listed with LAS 200-51 & INS 210-51

AMS 334 S — Topics in American Studies: Ethnic Studies — Lara Cahill Booth

Course title: Multi Ethnic American Literature

TuTh 3:30pm-4:45pm

This course will survey contemporary fiction, poetry, drama, memoir and essay written by and about African Americans, Native Americans, Chican@s, Latin@s, Asian Americans, and Arab Americans. In our comparative readings of Multi-Ethnic American Literature, we will examine immigration, displacement, and exile, language as a site of struggle and innovation, and of course, the complexities of race, class, gender, and sexuality. How does ethnicity shape identity formation? What is remembered or generated in the narration of personal and collective histories? What does literature written from these diverse ethnic perspectives reveal about belonging and non-belonging in the U.S.?

Co-Listed with ENG 210-S

AMS 335 E- Topics in American Studies: Gender

Course Title: Trauma, Gender and Sexuality

MWF 12:20pm-1:10pm

The topic of trauma comes up mostly in connection with events affecting individuals. Lately, “trauma” and “post-traumatic stress disorder” (PTSD) have been used quite frequently in reference to veterans returning from the war theater, victims of domestic abuse or sexual trauma, and victims of child abuse. But there are other ways of thinking about trauma. We can think of trauma in structural and insidious terms, i.e. as affecting whole segments of society just in virtue of their being who and what they are at a particular time in a particular place. In this class, we will look closely at how trauma discourse intersects with gender and sexuality and at how scholars, artists, and writers who deal with gender and sexuality have approached the discourse of trauma. Particular emphasis will be given to attempts to wrench trauma away from medicalization and to place it into spaces of healing that involve community and creativity. This class is a safe space for all people. No prerequisites. Writing credit. Eligible for the Queer Studies minor

Combined with WGS 350-E

AMS 339 N — Topics in American Studies: Urban Studies — Marvin Dawkins

Course title: The Black Ghetto

TuTh 8:00am-9:15am

This course examines the origin and evolution for the “ghetto” as a concept and the social and historical significance of the ghetto in understanding the development of black community life in urban America.

Co-Listed with SOC 388-N

AMS 350 O — History and Culture of South Florida — Jeff Donnelly

Course title: From Swamp to Swamped: Engaging Miami, South Florida, and Florida through History and Culture

TuTh 9:30am-10:45pm

Using the “city as school” methodology, the course surveys library and online resources about Florida and Miami and links them with explorations of the “hands-on” learning opportunities in the Miami area. The course will serve as an introduction to Florida and the Miami metropolitan area for some and provide indigenous Miamians and Floridians with new ways to think about their home and its future.

Guest speakers and field trips will ensure engagement with today’s South Florida; discussions and student blogs will provide active learning.

The goal of the course is to pose significant questions about the culture, politics, and economics of contemporary Florida and to use this vibrant and unique regional history to shape and further debate about creative answers to contemporary issues. For example: does the Florida experience provide useful direction for economic revitalization in other places? What is the future of South Florida in an age of rising seas?

Co-Listed with HIS 381-O

AMS 350 1T— Mapping Miami: Local Communities and Urban Development – George Yudice

Course title: Mapping Miami: Local Communities and Urban Development

Tu 5:00pm-7:40pm

This course has two parts. The first will familiarize students with the history of Greater Miami: its urban development and governance, its economic base, migrations and its diverse populations, and its relations with Latin America and the Caribbean. The second part will focus on the role of culture in development of the city from above and below – from formal institutions like museums, television and music industries, etc. to more informal venues and activities. Particular emphasis will be given to the various cultural communities throughout Miami: Little Haiti, Overtown, Little Havana, and the various Brazilian, Central American, Peruvian, Venezuelan, etc. This will entail an ethnographic component, as students will be

involved in getting to know representatives of these communities, their history and cultural life.

Combined with LAS 301-1T, MLL 322-1T

AMS 401 R- Seminar in American Studies – Joel Nickels

Course Title: American Literature 1915-1945

TuTh 2:00pm-3:15pm

In this course we will examine novelists such as Ernest Hemingway, Jean Toomer, William Faulkner, Djuna Barnes and John Steinbeck and poets such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Muriel Rukeyser, Langston Hughes and William Carlos Williams. We will focus on the ways these writers signaled their alienation from the socio-political realities of America in the historical period following World War I. We will also examine the visions of social redemption these authors attempted to evolve in response to the traumas of the war and its underlying causes. Crucial to our investigations will be the relationship of literary form to historical fact. Why was stylistic innovation so central to modernist writing, and how did literary “newness” relate to the accelerated pace of industrial production and social life in the early twentieth century? We will also be investigating modernism’s ideas about the human psyche and the ways in which these ideas were impacted by the mass displacements, mobilizations and conflicts of the early twentieth century.

Combined with ENG 484-R

AMS 501 01 — Senior Project- Donette Francis

Thesis/ Individual Study

Dates Arranged