

# The University of Miami



SPRING  
2016

AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM



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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
COLLEGE of  
ARTS & SCIENCES



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 101 O — Introduction to American Studies – Elizabeth Langley**

TuTh 9:30am-10:45am

In this class, we will foster an understanding of American Studies or American Cultural Studies through an interrogation of many keywords that are pertinent to the field. We will emphasize ethnicity, race, class, gender, identity and diaspora as well as their intersections with questions of language. In addition to initial brief readings that define these terms in the field, we will read and view a variety of texts that relate to or represent these keywords including fiction (short stories, novel excerpts, film and television) academic articles (from cultural theory to sociolinguistics), documentaries, essays, visual art and even satirical skits. Although we will treat many different cultural spaces, there will be a primary focus on Miami and its cultures.

**AMS 301 1U— Topics in American Studies: History — Henry Green**

Course Title: The American Jewish Experience: Hollywood and Popular Culture

Tu 6:25pm-9:05pm

Hollywood and Popular Culture is a course that uses the lens of films to interpret the American Jewish experience. Cinema began at the same time that the waves of Jews from Eastern Europe migrated to the USA (c. 1900). What has the Jewish presence brought to Hollywood and American popular culture and how has Hollywood shaped the Jewish American experience? A selection of genres (dramas, comedies, epics, and biographies) will be examined. Emphasis will be placed on how the experiences and attitudes of Americans, in general, and American Jewry, in particular, have been reflected on the screen from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until the present. The course will situate the films within the context of Hollywood culture----a complex industry in which ownership, production, distribution, exhibition, marketing and sales are closely intertwined. The tensions between maintaining an ethnic identity and assimilating, affirming cultural pluralism and “melting”, and continuing religious traditions in the face of modernity are core features of the course.

**Combined with REL 344/ JUS 360**

**AMS 301 K— Topics in American Studies— Aldo Regalado**

Course Title: Comics in America

MW 6:45pm-7:40pm

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

**Combined with ENG 210**

**AMS 310 P— U.S. and the World — Tim Watson**

Course Title: Contemporary World Literature

TuTh 11:00am-12:15pm

In this class, we will read novels by contemporary writers whose roots lie in former British colonies in South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean but for whom the United States is a significant focus in their writing, whether it is imagined as a new imperial power in the era of globalization, as a beacon for migrants seeking new opportunities, or often as both at the same time. In its first forty years, from the mid-1950s onward, postcolonial literature in English dramatized, resisted, and wrestled with the history of the British Empire that had oppressed millions of people, often brutally, but had also helped to create a generation of writers who used the language of the colonizers to eloquently oppose the Empire and its legacy in the postcolonial period. In the last twenty years, however, “postcolonial” literature has increasingly turned its attention away from Britain and toward the United States, which is often now where these writers are located. We will read and analyze some of the most significant novels that exemplify, and record, this cultural and historical transformation.

**Combined with ENG 321**

**AMS 322 B — Topics in American Studies: Literature — John Funchion**

Course Title: Edgar Allen Poe’s America

MWF 9:05am-9:55am

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 continues to surface in the mass media of our own age, as evinced by *The Simpson’s* popular rendition of “The Raven” and James McTeigue’s movie *The Raven*. 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 Baudelaire to Derrida have long displayed an infatuation with in his work. This course will invite students to revisit these many readings of Poe and to explore their own interpretations. Readings will include Poe’s prose and poetry, some popular adaptations of his work, and relevant writing by his contemporaries and later authors indebted to his work. This course will help students develop their critical thinking and writing skills by requiring active participation in class discussions, several informal writing responses, two short formal papers, one long formal paper, and a final exam.

**Combined with ENG 395**

**AMS 322 O — Topics in American Studies: Literature — Joseph Alkana**

Course title: American Literature 1800-1865

TuTh 9:30am-10:45am

In 1837 Ralph Waldo Emerson exhorted his contemporaries to awaken "the sluggard intellect of this continent," and American writers responded by creating a national literature that made distinctive demands of readers. In this class, we will discuss these demands, such as attention to the natural environment, the moral implications of contemporary politics, and the kinds of lived experience that resisted rational categorization. We will read, in addition to the works listed below, short pieces by Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, Margaret Fuller, and others. Requirements will include along with essay assignments along with a final essay examination.

**Texts:** James Fenimore Cooper, *The Deerslayer*; Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*; Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*; Herman Melville, *The Piazza Tales*; Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; In addition, we will read essays by Emerson, excerpts from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*; short stories by Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe, and excerpts from Sigmund Freud's essay *The Uncanny*.

**Combined with ENG 482**

**AMS 324 R— Topics in American Studies: Religion — David Kling**

Course title: Religion and Youth in Contemporary America

TuTh 2:00pm-3:15pm

Contrary to popular images, religion plays an important role in the lives of many teenagers and young adults in America. This course will draw from the traditional academic disciplines that have devoted attention to youth, such as education and child psychology, but will also include new scholarship on youth in the fields of sociology and history. In addition, the category of "youth" is expanded to include young adults (the traditional college age population). The general goal of the course is to examine critically the role that religion plays in the lives of youth in contemporary America.

Note: This is a WC

**Combined with REL 361**



**AMS 330 S — Topics in American Studies: Sociology — Marvin Dawkins**

Course title: Black Athletes in White America

TuTh 3:30pm-4:45pm

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 389**

**AMS 330 R — Topics in American Studies: Sociology — Marvin Dawkins**

Course title: The Black Ghetto

TuTh 2:00pm-3:15pm

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.

**Combined with SOC 388/ AAS 390**

**AMS 338 1J — Topics in American Studies: International Studies— Joseph Uscinski**

Course Title: Latino Politics

M 5:00pm-7:40pm

An examination of the impact of Latinos on domestic politics, the impact of transnational migration on hemispheric politics, and the impact of recent waves of immigration U.S. society, Latin American Society, the economy, workforce, education, media, culture, healthcare, and law enforcement.

**Combined with POL 402/ INS 410/LAS 491**

**AMS 350 01 — History and Culture of South Florida — Jeff Donnelly**

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

W 3:00pm-4:30pm

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?

**Combined with HIS 381**

**AMS 401 45- Seminar in American Studies – Robin Bachin**

Course Title: Introduction to Urban America

W 2:00pm-4:30pm

This course will examine the rise of cities throughout American history, with an emphasis on growth and development in the 19th and 20th centuries. We will focus on the layout of cities; the role of architectural styles in shaping both national and regional identities; the rise of urban segregation; the growth of suburbs and edge cities; and the impact of urban growth on the environment. The course will address a variety of factors that have helped shape American cities, including landscape, politics, economics, class, race, gender, and leisure. Thus, we will relate discussions of the built environment with broader concerns about shaping democratic public spheres, providing adequate shelter and transportation for residents, fostering capitalist growth, and establishing a sense of place.

In addition to providing students with an introduction to American urban history, a major goal of this course is to help students understand how historical understanding can help inform present-day conditions. Students will learn how many of the urban issues we discuss from a national and historical perspective have manifested themselves locally in South Florida. Students will then have the opportunity to work collaboratively with a local community organization that addresses some aspect of planning, urban development, and local history in Miami.

**Combined with HIS 369**

**AMS 401 4J- Seminar in American Studies – Sallie Hughes**

Course Title: Latinos in the Media

W 5:00pm-7:40pm

This course examines the history, politics, production and reception of Latino-oriented media. It considers Latino media production processes, as well as Latino/a audiences' immigration, incorporation and media reception patterns. The course takes advantage of Miami as a vibrant Latino/a media production site through field trips and independent research projects.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the experience of Latina/o communities in the United States, including their diversity and differences with Anglo American and African American experiences.
- Consider/evaluate differences between various Latina/o sub-groups and the ways in which these identities permeate media production, representation and reception.
- Understand the historical development and current diversity of Latina/o-oriented media.
- Conduct independent research on Latina/o media or audiences.

**Combined with JMM 404/LAS 370/SPA 310**

**AMS 499 01 — Independent Study- Donette Francis**

Thesis/ Individual Study

Dates Arranged