

American Studies

Spring 2024

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. 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 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**).

For an advising appointment, please contact the Program Director: carce@miami.edu.

Spring 2024

AMS 101- Intro to American Studies

Section K: MWF 6:35pm-7:50pm

Merrick 203

Instructor: Aldo Regalado

"Forming Identities in American Culture"

Course Overview: 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 Topics in American Studies

Section 1T: Tuesdays 5:05pm – 7:50pm

Dooly Memorial 109

Instructor: Henry Green

"Hollywood – Barbie and the American Jewish Experience"

Course Overview: The course delves into the American Jewish Experience through watching and reviewing films over the last 100 years. What do Jews bring to Hollywood and American popular culture and how does Hollywood shape the Jewish American experience? A selection of genres (dramas, comedies, musicals, crime, war, documentaries, and biographies) are examined to answer these questions. The tensions between maintaining an ethnic identity and assimilating, affirming cultural pluralism and "melting", and sustaining religious tradition in the face of modernity are core features of the course within the context of inclusiveness and diversity. *No pre-req's required; if canelink requires prerequisite, contact instructor for override: hgreen@miami.edu

**Hybrid Instruction: In-person and zoom.

Co-Listed REL 334 & JUS 360

AMS 310 The United States in the World

"The Brand is the Star: American Narratives of Art & Business After the Great Recession"

Section GH: MW 2:30pm-3:45pm

Dooly Memorial 108

Instructor: Carmen Petaccio

Email: cap279@miami.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30 - 1:30 PM

Course Overview: How did the 2008 Financial Crisis impact the culture industry in the United States? What might those potential impacts tell us about how American artists and audiences

perceive, discuss, and value dominant narratives concerning the art world and the national economy? In “The Brand is the Star,” students are invited to engage with recent films and TV series that seek to simultaneously mythologize and critique the most prominent figures and companies in the tech, fashion, food, and entertainment sectors. By placing equal emphasis on aesthetic choices on the screen and the financial forces behind it, the class will do more than add nuance to discussions of pop culture from the previous decade; will attempt to articulate the realities and fantasies that combine to define the American character at home and abroad.

AMS 321- Topics in American Studies: History

Instructor: Donald Spivey

Section 1U: Tuesdays 6:35pm-9:20pm

Whitten LC 182

“African American History 1877-Present”

Course Overview: History 210 is a spirited exploration of those factors that have shaped and been shaped by people of African descent in the United States from the end of Reconstruction to the present. Some of the critical issues we will examine are: black life under Jim Crow, the impact of industrial and technological development on black Americans, the African-American educational experience and the rise of HBCUs, leadership in the black community, the evolution and impact of ideologies from accommodationism and integration to Black Nationalism, the African-American exodus and urban experience, the cultural life of the community in the era of the Harlem Renaissance and beyond, the modern Civil Rights Movement and its aftermath, and the current state of African America.

The student’s grade for the course will be based on the following:

- Four book analyses of three pages each (12.5% each; 50%).
- Participation in class discussion of required readings will count for extra credit.
- No midterm examination.
- A comprehensive in-class essay final examination (50%) based upon lectures, readings, and documentaries.
- Please make special note that under no circumstances will late work be accepted nor the grade of incomplete (I) given. Electronic submissions (email attachments and faxes) are not acceptable.

*A service-learning project may be done in lieu of two (2) of the book analyses or for extra credit. More on this option in class. This option does not alter the student’s responsibility to do all of the required reading.

Co-listed with HIS 210

AMS 321- Topics in American Studies: History

Instructor: Edmund Abaka

Section GH: MW 2:30pm-3:45pm

Wolfson 2040

“The African Diaspora in South Florida”

Course Overview: This course examines the historical experiences of the African Diaspora in South Florida through a close analyses of three junctures in the history of the Black experience: the slave trade, abolition and emancipation; the migration of various African-descended peoples from the Caribbean, Latin America, and Central America to South Florida; and the increasingly more recent addition of people from the African continent and other Africans from other parts of the United States. The major themes to be tackled in the time frame include, among others, migration, culture contact, creation of «new cultures,» political activism, including civil rights activism, and the émergence of «new» communities that have enriched the political, economic and social landscape in South Florida. In this class, however, we shall put a lot of emphasis on the African Diaspora at the University of Miami and utilize the rich collection of information on the Trailblazers, Black Faculty, Black alumni, administrators, and students.

Co-listed with HIS 203G

AMS 321 Topics in American Studies: History

Instructor: Ashli White

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

Dooly Memorial 217

“The Early Republic (1783-1850)”

Course Overview: Beginning with the end of the American Revolution and concluding with the War of 1812, this course examines the earliest years of U.S. republic. We explore both internal and international influences on the making of the United States: everything from the wrangling over the Constitution, the rise of the first political parties, and constant challenges from Indigenous and enslaved people to the impact of the French and Haitian revolutions, relations with the Caribbean, and the ever-present specter of Britain. During our consideration, we pay close attention not only to political and economic developments, but to cultural and social changes as well.

Co-listed with HIS 363

AMS 321 Topics in American Studies: History

Instructor: Michael Bernath

Section R: Tu/Th 2:00pm-3:15pm

Whitten LC 184

“History of the Old South (1607-1876)”

Course Overview: This course examines the history of the Old South. We will discuss antebellum southern economic, social, and cultural development including the Cotton Boom, the growth and maturation of the plantation slave system, the southern defense of slavery, the

growing political controversies with the North, and the development of a separate southern identity. We will look at the experiences of many different groups of southerners – male and female, black and white, enslaved and free, slaveholder and nonslaveholder. From these perspectives, we will attempt to discover what made this massive and diverse region into “The South,” and how this unifying concept of “southern-ness” came to be accepted by outsiders and southerners alike. By 1861, this notion of southern distinctiveness would prove strong enough to overcome even the bonds of nationhood, pulling white southerners down the road to independence, war, and ultimately the destruction of the Old South.

Co-listed with HIS 379

AMS 321 Topics in American Studies: History

Instructor: Eduardo Elena

Section: S: Tu/Th 3:30pm-4:45pm

Mahoney/Pearson Com 116

History of the Cold War in the Americas

Course Overview: 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 the 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, and El Salvador. The emphasis throughout will be on balancing an appreciation for the domestic dynamics and international forces behind Cold War conflicts. 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.

Co-listed with HIS 254

AMS 322 Topics in American Studies: Literature

Instructor: John Funchion

Section R: Tu/Th 2:00pm-3:15pm

Dooly Memorial 214

“Art of the Con: Con Artists, Tricksters and Card Sharks in US Literature and Culture”

Course Overview: In an era of rife with financial fraud, identity theft, social media manipulation, and political graft, why do we celebrate the exploits of scam artists in recent films and TV series such *Mr. Robot*, *Black Monday*, *House of Lies*, the *Oceans* movies, *Hustlers*, or *The Wolf of Wall Street*? Why are we so afraid of getting “fleeced” and yet so enchanted by those who do the fleecing? How do cons work? 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. We will also learn about the narrative and formal features confidence games.

Co-Listed with ENG241

AMS 322 Topics in American Studies: Literature

Instructor: Donette Francis

Section P: Tu/Th 11:00am-12:15pm

Wolfson 4026

“Black Miami Studies”

Course Overview: 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 a model for changing national and hemispheric demographics. 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. Through 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. We will spend the semester -- identifying, documenting, and ‘mapping’ Black Miami arts and aesthetics, built environment, education, health, and well-being, as well as community capacity. In addition to subject experts, the course will engage critical workshop style that raise productive questions-- discussing theories, methods, close readings, and occasional short in-class writing. Students will produce midterm and final papers.

Co-Listed with ENG395

AMS324: Topics in American Studies - Religion

Instructor: Robyn Walsh

Section 1R: Tuesdays 2:00pm-4:45pm

Merrick 217

“Is Star Wars a Religion?”

Course Overview: From a mysterious force that links the universe, to the resurrection of powerful figures, supernatural adoptions, and the ruins of its holy cities, the Star Wars franchise both invokes and evokes associations with what we might call religious themes and imagery. This course will explore the possible intersections between the Star Wars universe and the category of religion in an effort to test the proposition that Star Wars is-- or perhaps one day might become-- a religion. Among the questions we will ask are: what does it take for something

to be a religion? How do new religious movements start? How do we theorize the study of religion? What turns certain narratives into canon? Do the similarities between *Star Wars* and religion represent intentional strategy on the part of the filmmakers, writers, artists, and imagineers, or does it reflect a larger social phenomenon?

* This is a Harkness/flipped classroom course and will be run in a seminar style with limited enrollment.

Co-Listed with REL369

AMS329: Topics in American Studies - Art

Instructor: Christina Larson

Section 4J: W 5:05pm-7:50pm

Merrick 309

“American Art: Civil War to Now”

Course Overview: This is an in-person course. “American Art and Culture: Civil War to Now” surveys the history and culture of the United States from 1865 until the present. Readings and lectures explore American social art history and artistic production. The textbook is used for a general overview of these topics, while the lecture notes and online videos expand on this information. Students will think critically about American artwork and its intersections with politics, religion, race, gender, and class.

AMS 326: Topics in American Studies - Education

Instructor: Dr. Scotney Evans

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

Dooley Memorial 218

“Understanding Human Services Organizations”

Course Overview: Focus on unique role of community-bases human services organizations in society with an overview and history of community organizations, which provide services, support, advocacy, and organizing in today’s communities. Review of the systems, cultures, structures, and processes of community organizations with a special emphasis on promoting well-being in communities.

Co-Listed with EPS 321

AMS 326: Topics in American Studies - Education

Instructor: Dr. Scotney Evans

Section P: Tu/Th 11:00am-12:15pm

Dooly Memorial 218

“Community Psychology and Development”

Course Overview: 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

Instructor: Dr. Dina Birman

Section Q: Tu/Th 12:30pm-1:45pm

Merrick 204

“Migration, Well Being and Human Development”

Course Overview: This course explores the social and psychological processes involved in migration and issues relevant to well-being of diverse immigrant groups including immigration policies, the psychology of immigration and acculturation, ethnic identities, issues in immigrant families, immigrant communities, educational, health, and mental health issues.

Co-Listed with EPS 412

AMS 401 Seminar in American Studies

Instructor: Susan Haack

Section GH: MW 2:30pm-3:45pm

Dooly Memorial 114

“Science and Values”

Course Overview: How do the social sciences differ from the natural sciences? (Are they properly called "sciences" at all?) Could the social sciences, in principle, be reduced to physics? Intentional social science vs. the non-intentional (e.g., social vs. physical anthropology). What is disinterestedness in inquiry, and why do we value it? Is disinterested social-scientific inquiry possible, or is all such inquiry inevitably political? How do the internal organization of science, and its larger social context, affect what questions are investigated and what conclusions are reached? Nazi and Soviet science. What could the sociological study of science contribute to our understanding of how the natural sciences work? Issues of funding, peer review, fraud. The role of science in society. Who should decide, and how, what research should be funded, whether and when scientific research should be regulated or prohibited, whether some applications of scientific knowledge should be restricted, regulated, or prohibited?

Co-listed with HIS 396, PHI, REL, BIL

HIS 561/661 (*AMS 401 Seminar in American Studies*)

Section 4G: W 2:30pm-5:15pm

Ashe 427

Instructor: Robin Bachin

“Studies in United States History: Cities in American History”

Course Overview: 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, economics, class, race, gender, and public policy. Thus, we will relate discussions of the built and natural environments with broader concerns about creating democratic public spheres, providing adequate shelter and transportation for residents, promoting capitalist growth, shaping (in)equitable in community development, and establishing a sense of place.

** This class is an advanced undergrad/graduate course with several 300-level HIS prerequisites. Advanced AMS students who have fulfilled the HIS requirements may petition to take it for AMS 401 credit *only* if they meet the requirements and receive instructor and AMS director approval. Interested students should write directly to the instructor to inquire about the prerequisites: rbachin@miami.edu.*

Co-listed with HIS 561/661

AMS 401 Seminar in American Studies

Instructor: John Funchion

Section S: Tu/Th 3:30pm-4:45pm

Dooly Memorial 214

American Literature from 1865-1915: Narratives of Unrest

Course Overview: The nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were plagued by economic and social turmoil. With each succeeding financial “panic,” national unrest intensified and the gap between wealthy Robber Barons and wage laborers widened. Racist violence broke out in the Southern States in tandem with Jim Crow laws and other forms of racial oppression. During this same period, 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 how late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century US authors responded to these economic and political crises and consider whether literary movements like realism, regionalism, and naturalism challenged or channeled 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, Sutton E. Griggs, Frances E.W. Harper, Pauline Hopkins, Henry James, Sarah Orne Jewett, Jack London, and Žitkála-Sá.

Co-Listed with ENG483

AMS 499 Independent Study

Instructor: Dr. Christine Arce

Section 01: ARRANGED

AMS 501 Senior Project

Instructor: Dr. Christine Arce

Section 01: ARRANGED