

American Studies Program
American University, College of Arts and Sciences
Spring 2012 Course Offerings

American Studies

AMST-140 Washington, D.C.: Life Inside a Monument

W 08:55AM 11:35AM TBA

Explores the unique nature of Washington as an international city, national capital, black-American cultural center, and home for its varied residents. Discussions include tensions between federal presence and local democracy, tourism, political and cultural activities, migration and immigration, geography and the cityscape and neighborhood life.

AMST-240 Poverty and Culture

TF 10:20AM 11:35AM McNeil, B

Students explore and debate rival theories about the causes and consequences of poverty. Why poverty occurs, why certain people are poor, how poverty influences family and community life, and how the poor respond to their situation and sometimes try to change it. Usually offered every spring. Prerequisite for General Education credit: COMM-100 or ECON-100 or GOVT-110 or SOCY-150.

AMST-296-002 Sister Cities: DC and NYC

MTH 2:35PM 3:50PM Smith, E

America has always been a two capital country: Washington, DC is the national capital of our government while New York is the national capital of our economy. Pennsylvania Avenue and Wall Street exist as the reverse sides of the same coin. This course explores how these two magnificent

urban centers, the "heart" and "soul" of America, continue to compete with and compliment each other, and thereby enrich our entire culture.

AMST-296-003 Supreme Court and the Country

MTH 11:45AM 01:00PM Smith, E

This course is designed to enhance appreciation of the power and influence of the only unelected branch tri-partite federal system of government. The class carefully examines famous Supreme Court landmark rulings from Marbury vs. Madison in 1803 through Roe vs. Wade a hundred and seventy years later in 1973. Students read several critical biographies of selected justices of the court and a visit to Arlington National Cemetery, where twelve justices are buried, is a significant component of the course.

AMST-296-004 The Wire and Urban Crisis

TH 05:30PM 08:00PM TBA

Using the TV series The Wire, this course analyzes the "urban crisis," including the results of deindustrialization, political corruption, urban poverty, drug abuse and the physical, social and economic abandonment of American cities. In the process, students get to know the city of Baltimore by reading about its history, demographics, geography, and the social and cultural forces that contributed to its construction and destruction. Course sub-themes include the state of urban public education, police surveillance, the influence of the media, suburbanization and the image of the city, prostitution, and

the problem of abandoned or neglected infrastructure.

AMST-321 Critical Whiteness in the U.S.

M 05:30PM 08:00PM Woodfork, J

This course explores various political and cultural responses to the Great Depression, from the New Deal to Fascism, and from Stalinists to anti-Stalinists to recapture the excitement many felt, as well as their despair, as politicians, demagogues, union organizers, novelists, poets, and filmmakers sought to remake the world.

AMST -334-001 Black Popular Culture

MTH 01:10PM 02:25PM TBA

This course uses a variety of forms of aesthetic expression, including film, music, art, language, and fashion, to explore the development of black popular culture in America. Placing cultural and intellectual developments in their social context, students critically examine topics such as the commodification of African-American entertainment forms, and what it means to perform Blackness in a racialized and market-driven society.

AMST -334-002 The U.S. Through Foreign Eyes

T 05:30PM 08:00PM Laney, M.

Since its inception, the United States has been the subject of celebration, inspiration, and condemnation from those living outside its borders. This course uses a wide variety of primary sources to explore how the United States has tried to project itself abroad, as well as how a variety of commentators, e.g., journalists, heads of states, intellectuals, migrants, and minorities in other countries, have

responded to the United States at different times.

AMST -334-003 Sexuality and Social Media

TF 02:35PM 03:50PM Woods, S.

This course examines the interplay between sex, sexuality, and social media. The growth of online communication and social networks has encouraged sexual expression, sex education, and activism. However, social media has also increased fear, misinformation, prejudice, and harassment with respect to individual and group sexuality. The course explores the advantages and disadvantages of social media, and the impact of its rapid growth on sexuality, relationships, and identity forming.

AMST-341-001 The Civil War in Washington

W 11:45AM 02:25PM Smith, E.

This course is designed to introduce students to the key causes and consequences of the Civil War by exploring the remnants and remembrances of the era that remain in the nation's capital. The course combines lectures with study tours to important historical sites in the Washington, D.C. area, providing students with a sense of history as it was lived.

AMST-341-002 Latino Community in DC Area

W 05:30PM 08:00PM Campos, M.

This interdisciplinary course explores the growing Latino community of the Washington, DC metropolitan area and its challenges and contributions in a historical context. In addition to classroom experiences, the course uses local

community-based organizations as a key resource. Students learn about issues such as immigration and legal rights, affordable housing and gentrification, education, youth gangs, health, employment and day laborers, and other concerns at the forefront of local and national Latino life.

AMST-341-004 Mapping D.C. Geographies

TF 01:10PM 02:25PM Edelman, E.

In this course students reconsider how Washington, D.C., as a city inhabited and traversed by various types of communities and persons, can be visualized and understood in radically different ways. Specifically, the course attends to issues of human geography and mapping through issues of space and place, belonging, gentrification, race, class, gender, and sexuality. The class explores these elements through discussions and films, guest speakers, off-campus explorations of DC, and primary data collection through interviews and personal map production.

AMST-341-005 Washington D.C. Schooling

TF 08:55AM 10:10AM Delfino, J.

This course explores from a critical perspective many of the major presuppositions to emerge from contemporary (1980s to present) urban education reform regarding race and academic achievement. The course focuses on Washington, D.C. as a site where current education reform efforts have been tested and challenged by differently positioned communities, stakeholders, and social actors, lending a multi-faceted complexity to nationally resonant debates such as the achievement gap. Drawing primarily from ethnographic, historical, and sociolinguistic literature, this course enriches students' understanding of how

race and/in schooling reflects wider systems of belonging and inclusion (and their counterparts) and socioeconomic stratification in the United States, asking how the schooling system may actually reproduce many of the major inequalities it purports to mitigate.

AMST-400-001 Interpreting American Culture

W 11:45AM 02:25PM Vester, K

Seminar in American studies theory and methods. Classic, emerging, and controversial approaches to American culture through such mixed media as architecture and photography, original documents and literary criticism, folklife and foodways, television and music. Usually offered alternate springs. Prerequisite: AMST-206 and two additional American Studies courses at the 300-level, or permission of instructor.

AMST-410 Senior Thesis II (3)

Prerequisite: AMST-400.

AMST-490 Independent Study Project in Amer Studies

Prerequisite: permission of instructor and program director.

AMST-491 Internship in American Studies

Prerequisite: Permission of Instructor and Program Director.

Anthropology

ANTH 339-002 African American Cultures

TF 11:45AM 01:00PM Prince, S.

This course explores cultural diversity among African Americans and the presence of experimental and ideological

patterns that cut across myriad differences. It begins with a consideration of the African heritage of black Americans and examines African American history from 1880 to the present. The primary goal is to understand the impact of the past upon the present cultural constructions and political economic realities. Additional areas of focus include African American popular culture and other forms of artistic expression, as well as the impact of key social variables such as class, gender, sexuality, skin color, and others upon black life. Meets with ANTH-639 002.

ANTH-531-002 Archaeology of Colonialism in North America

T 08:10PM 10:10PM

An examination of colonies and colonial practices in North America, ca. 1500-1850. Archaeological case studies highlight variation in colonial strategies employed by Western nation-states, and the different responses of indigenous people, from accommodation to resistance.

Art History

ARTH-396-002 Women and the Avant-Garde

TH 05:30PM 08:00PM Bellow, J.

With the emergence of private, coeducational art academies in the late nineteenth century, a surge of women artists began working in the avant-garde styles promoted by a fast-growing network of dealers and galleries. However, these women's status within such movements was contradictory and ambivalent. Meets with ARTH-696 001.

Education

EDU-319-001 Children's Literature: Multicultural and International Approaches

T 05:30PM 08:00PM Vasquez, V

Exploration and critical analysis of multicultural and international children's literature from preschool to adolescence. Includes how contemporary issues are reflected in different genres, as well as marginalization, gender equity, social inequity, racism, and censorship. Usually offered every spring.

Government

GOVT-482 Women and Politics

T 08:10PM 10:40PM O'Connor, K.

This course examines the evolutionary role of women in politics - as voters, citizens, candidates, and leaders - from the Seneca Falls Convention to the present. The role of women's organizations and movements in the expansion of political and legal rights are also explored. Usually offered every term. Meets with GOVT-682. Prerequisite: GOVT-110.

GOVT-483 Women, Politics, and Public Policy

W 05:30PM 08:00PM Sherman, E.

This course examines a wide variety of issues of concern to women, including healthcare, welfare, educational equity, employment discrimination, and reproductive rights are examined through the lens of the formal policy-making process. Meets with GOVT-683. Prerequisite: GOVT-110.

GOVT-485 Political Skill Building

SSU 09:00AM 05:00PM
Timmons, A.

This weekend course helps build political skills that can translate to jobs in the political arena in Washington, DC or at the local level. It includes speakers from major polling firms, consulting firms, elected officials, representatives from Capitol Hill, K Street and the media. The class addresses public speaking skills as well as public policy and issue advocacy. Meets with GOVT-685 003.

Health and Fitness

HFIT-245 Gender, Culture and Health

TH 11:45AM 02:25PM Bloom, S.

Provides basic understanding of gender and cultural issues affecting health. Emphasis is placed on male/female and ethnic disparities in health status and how these gender and cultural indicators affect behavioral risk factors. The relationship between health and other factors such as religion, social class/socioeconomic status, acculturation, migration, and globalization are also studied. Usually offered every term. Prerequisite for General Education credit: ANTH-150 or PSYC-105 or SOCY-100 or WGST-125.

History

HIST-220 Women in America

MTH 08:55AM 10:10AM Curtin, M.

Incorporating a multidisciplinary perspective; both primary and secondary readings, this course examines change and continuity in the experience of American women from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Focuses on social and political movements of special concern to women, including suffrage, birth control, women's liberation, and contemporary antifeminism. Usually offered every spring.

HIST-355 Emergence of Modern America, 1877-1920

MTH 11:45AM 01:00PM Goldstene, C.

The course considers themes in the modernization of America: the rise of corporations and cities, the influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, and the advent of the new diplomacy and imperialism. Also studies populism and progressivism. Meets with HIST-655. Usually offered alternate years.

HIST-373 American Jewish History

MTH 10:20AM 11:35AM Nadell, P.

Today American Jewry constitutes the preeminent Diaspora Jewish community. This course traces its historical development by examining the waves of Jewish immigration to the United States and the institutions that American Jews created to sustain their community. Meets with HIST-673. Usually offered alternate springs.

HIST-380 Race and Politics since 1945

MTH 04:00PM 05:15PM Curtin, M.

This course focuses on the modern evolution, and implications of African-American voting and African-American office holding. It traces how federal action, court cases, international pressure, non-violent direct action, courageous activism, and the everyday drudgery of political organizing transformed politics in the South, and then the nation. The dilemma of African-American politicians and how race continues to influence the direction of the nation's two main political parties is also examined. Meets with HIST-680 001.

HIST-396-003 The United States and the Middle East

W 08:55AM 11:35AM

Mann, B.

This course covers the history of the United States' relationship with the nations and peoples of the Middle East. U.S. interests there date back to the Barbary Wars and continue down to today's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The course focuses especially on U.S.-Middle East relations after 1945. Meets with HIST-696 003.

HIST-500-005 History of American Sexuality

M 08:10PM-10:40PM

Kuznick, P.

This colloquium explores recent historical interpretations of the social, cultural, and political history of sexuality in the United States, a field that has flourished in recent decades inspired by the women's, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender movements' challenge to male-dominated, middle class, heterosexual standards. The course moves chronologically through U.S. history, from pre-European settlement Native American practices through contemporary concerns. It approaches sexuality not as universal, natural, unchanging, instinctual behavior, but as a politically, socioeconomically, ideologically, and culturally contested and evolving domain of meanings and behaviors. It pays particular attention to sexual politics in the broadest sense, exploring the relation of sexuality to the institutional and power structures of American capitalism, and assesses the success of efforts to regulate sexuality by the state and other authorities, including physicians and clergymen. It also considers the impact of sexuality on racial, class, and gender identities and interactions, and vice versa. Meets with HIST-500 006.

Honors Colloquia

HNRS 302-004H Media and the American Mind

MTH 10:20AM 11:35AM Streitmatter,R

Movies, TV shows, newspapers, and advertising all influence who we vote for, how we define America's role in global politics, and where we stand on such major issues as same-sex marriage and stem-cell research, while at the same time helping to shape our moral values and to determine how we dress, how we spend our leisure time, and what kind of sexual activities we engage in. This course explores the vital role that the various media genres play--historically as well as in contemporary times--in affecting American society writ large and simultaneously influencing the individual attitudes and actions of those who make up that society.

HNRS 302-013H The Story of Human Rights

M 5:30-8 p.m.

Susan Benesch

This course will explore how human rights are born, how they become law, and how those laws are enforced. During the semester each student will research the life story of one particular human right (such as the right to food, to freedom of expression, to health) and will present that narrative as a paper, a film, a website, or in another medium approved by the professor. Students will emerge from the course with solid knowledge of mechanisms for human rights enforcement, and with useful advocacy skills.

Justice, Law, and Society

JLS-454 Violence in America

MTH 02:35PM 03:50PM

Emphasis on various ideologies and events that cause or reduce violence, such as

social movements, depressions, war, and political repression.

JLS-352 Criminal Behavior: A Psychosocial Analysis

F 02:35PM 05:15PM Weiner, R.

Basic psychiatric principles including contemporary views of causes, manifestations, patterns, and treatments of psychiatric and behavioral disorders; trends in the use of psychiatric resources to deal with deviant behavior within and without the criminal justice system. Includes incompetence as bar to trial, insanity as defense, civil commitment, drug addiction, alcoholism, psychiatry in processing and treating juvenile offenders, and rehabilitative efforts of the corrections system. Usually offered every fall.

Literature

LIT-308-001 All That Jazz

MTH 02:35PM 03:50PM Leonard, K.

This course explores what could be called the American jazz-blues tradition, the influential formal innovations, especially in poetry, that American writers developed from the ways in which they were inspired by the music. The course examines how the music's common themes of existentialism, individuality, ethnic affirmation, racial difference, and freedom motivated literature that contributed to the distinctiveness of an American national literary identity. Artists include Langston Hughes, the Beat poets, Toni Morrison, Sonia Sanchez, William Matthews and Yusef Komunyakaa, among others. Meets with LIT-608 001.

LIT-315: American Romanticism: Gothic & Sentimental Literature

TF 10:20AM 11:35AM Noble, M.

This course surveys Anglo-American Gothic and Sentimental novels and films from their inception in the eighteenth century. The focus is psychological and cultural: what expressive needs did these genres serve for their authors and readers, particularly given the cultural moment of their emergence? In particular, the course explores the relationship between affect and eroticism. Texts studied include Man of Feeling, Oliver Twist, Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Wide, Wide World, Castle of Otranto, Jane Eyre, Dracula, Frankenstein, and concludes with Stephen King, Jodi Picoult, and selected films. Meets with LIT-615 001.

LIT-346-002 The Western

TF 11:45AM 01:00PM
W 05:30PM 08:00PM

From 1910 to the end of the 1950s, a single Hollywood genre dominated the movies to a degree that has never been duplicated. A full quarter of all Hollywood films made during this period were Westerns; they defined and debated the identity of the nation like no other cultural force. This course studies the Western in its many manifestations: classic, revisionist, hybrid, feminist, spaghetti, and postmodern. The class explores the cultural meanings wrought into its form, its icons, and its relationship to American history and American mythology; and seeks to understand the reasons for its dominance, its precipitous disappearance from the cultural landscape during the 1970s, and its tenuous afterlife in the twenty-first century. Key works from the Western canon are screened, and key essays from the critical corpus are read to investigate different critical approaches to the genre. Meets with LIT-646 002.

Philosophy

PHIL-386-003 Reading/Writing United States

W 11:45AM 02:25PM Flax, J.

Using a combination of novels, films, historical documents such as the U.S. constitution, and writings by authors as varied as the pragmatists, John Rawls, and Toni Morrison, the class tracks the ongoing contested processes of interpretation and meaning construction that engender the founding and reconstituting of the "imagined community" called "The United States." Meets with PHIL-686 003.

Sociology

SOCY-310 Language, Culture, Power

TH 01:10PM 03:50PM Pascale,C.

This course cultivates an understanding of contemporary ideas regarding the role of language and representation in the production, maintenance, and subversion of relations of power, social identities, and social hierarchies. The course is hands-on and students draw from course readings to examine popular film, advertisements, newspaper articles, and social interactions. Discussions and readings develop insights into the various ways in which gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and ability are constructed and contested through systems of language and representation. Usually offered every spring. Prerequisite: SOCY-415.

SOCY-352 Women, Men, and Social Change

TF 02:35PM 03:50PM Young, G.

Focuses on gender as a basic organizational principle of social life in order to study the social construction of gender and how gender relationships are

transformed in the process of social change. The course examines how race, class, and gender interact with culture in shaping the lives, social positions and relationships of diverse kinds of women and men in a changing world. Usually offered every spring. Prerequisite: SOCY-100 or SOCY-150.

SOCY-552 Sociology of Popular Culture

MTH 02:35PM 03:50PM McDonic, S.

Popular culture is an increasingly central part of people's lives. This course acquaints students with major sociological theories of popular culture and applies them to areas including music, films, mass media, race, identity, novels, love, and sex. Usually offered every spring.

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

WGSS-350-001 Women in Sport

TF 08:55AM 10:10AM

This course centers on women in sports with discussion and debates in sport-centered issues affecting gender. The course explores a range of issues in sports media and careers in the sports industry. Course content is delivered using a variety of methods including lecture, online and class discussion, guest speakers, and film. Major projects are active learning assignments such as The Seminar Apprentice, which is modeled after the reality television competition and requires students to develop the most relevant new or creative product or service to be marketed to the female consumer.

WGSS-350-002 Gay and Lesbian Documentary

W 08:10PM 10:10PM Connelly, R.

This course follows the evolution of gay and lesbian-themed documentary within the historical context of the LGBT movement. Students examine the emerging voice of the gay documentarian, and discuss the topics of these films as they advance through themes of persecution, activism, and diversity within the gay and lesbian community.

WGSS-3500-003 LGBT Lives

T 05:30PM 08:00PM Bruno, M.

This course explores the lived experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people through the use of scholarly and popular reading, films, and guest speakers. With these materials, the course examines how identity and community are socially constructed and how LGBT experiences are located in larger U.S. society.