

**American Studies Program**  
**American University, College of Arts and Sciences**  
**Spring 2010 Course Offerings**

**\*\*If you have questions about declaring your major or minor, or about the AMST major/minor in general, please contact Dr. Katharina Vester at [vester@american.edu](mailto:vester@american.edu)**

**American Studies**

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

T 02:10PM 4:50PM Smith, E

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**

MTH 03:35PM 04:50PM

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-321 American Decades: America in the 1930s**

MW 05:20PM 06:35PM Manson, M

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-334-002 Sister Cities: Washington, DC and New York City**

TF 11:20AM 12:35PM 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 -334-003 Topics in Public History: Experiencing History in America's National Parks,**

W 02:10PM 04:50PM Thelen

This course focuses on how individuals anticipate, engage, and remember their visits to historical parks sites. In addition to readings and discussion, the course will involve research at and on National Park Service sites in the Washington region.

theoretical and methodological approaches discussed in the class.

### **AMST-341 Mapping Washington D.C. Geographies**

TF 03:35PM 04:50PM

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-396 Material Worlds: Crafts in the Americas**

F 02:10PM 04:50PM

The Americas represent a melange of peoples and cultures, accompanied by diverse forms of cultural expression. Material culture and "crafts" represent one substantial facet of cultural identity, ideology, distinction and prestige, as well as having functional and practical uses in both historical and contemporary contexts. This course begins with an overview of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of material culture in an American context, from their production to their final consumption and eventual disposal. It surveys examples from an array of historical and ethnographic craft traditions and material cultures throughout the Western hemisphere. Students have the opportunity to conduct their own research projects on a craft tradition, ethnographic artifact, or material culture of their choice, interlacing their findings with the

### **AMST-396 Selected Topics: Non-recurring (1-6)**

#### **Namaste America**

T 05:30PM 08:00PM Gill, H

This course explores the historical contributions and the significance of South Asian diasporic communities living in North America on American culture, history, and politics. From Apu in *The Simpsons* to Arundhati Roy's critique of U.S. imperialism to *Slumdog Millionaire*, the course looks at how various elements of South Asian cultures such as religion, cinema, literature, cuisine, etc. have become part of the American cultural fabric. In addition, students also look at how the United States relates to the Indian-subcontinent, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka and above all India, a rising global superpower with an increasing influence of political, economical and cultural realms around the world.

### **AMST-400 Interpreting American Culture**

#### **Disciplined Subjects: Cultural Constructions of the Modern Body**

W 11:20AM 02:00PM Vester, K

This class examines the most recent theory in the study of embodiments. Looking at how race, class, gender, sexuality and the concept of able-bodiedness are made flesh today, the course explores the many practices and discourses that help shape and mediate the individual body. One

focus of this class will be on the cultural imperative to constantly “work” with one’s body. In this section we will discuss beautification practices, the philosophy of make-overs, body adornments such as tattoos and cosmetic surgery. The other focus will be on deviant bodies, bodies that do not fit the normative assumptions of Western society, such as obese, queer and disabled bodies. They are constructed, too -- traditionally as the ideal’s negative other. We will see how this notion is challenged by activists and scholars today.

### **AMST-411 Senior Thesis II (3)**

Usually offered every spring. Prerequisite: AMST-400.

### **Art History**

#### **ARTH-396-001 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      Hodges, A

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 Woman and Politics (3)**

M 02:10PM 04:50PM Lawless, J

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.

#### **GOVT-485-001 Women in Foreign Relations**

SSU 09:00AM 05:00PM  
03/20/10-03/21/10

This weekend course explores the impact of women on foreign policy. It assesses how women’s work in the arena differs from male counterparts, as well as the numbers of women involved in foreign policy and how their impact on foreign policy differs from male counterparts. The course examines policy initiatives from women in the community and the impact their work has on women and families. Meets with GOVT-685 001.

#### **002 Women, Politics, and the Media**

SSU 09:AM 05:00PM  
02/06/10-02/07/10

This weekend course explores the relationship between women in politics and the media. The class assesses the manner in which female journalists cover politics, looking both at the number of women in the profession as well as how their work differs from their male counterparts. The

course also examines media coverage of prominent women in politics and the extent to which it is gendered. Meets with GOVT-685 002.

### **003 Political Skills Building Workshop**

SSU 09:00AM 05:00PM  
03/27/10-03/28/10

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**

TF 12:45PM 02:00PM          Goodson, L

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-380-001 American Indian Histories from Native/Non-Native Perspective**

MTH 09:55AM 11:10AM      Lawrence, A

This seminar examines North American Indian histories over the last 500 years through a variety of texts and perspectives ranging from surveys written by Native and non-Native historians to specific tribal histories. Close attention is paid to the substance and the structure of these histories, as well as the general historiography. Note: background in U.S. history is recommended. Meets with HIST-680 001.

#### **HIST-500-001 American Society's Response to Disease: Smallpox to Swine Flu**

T 05:30 08:00PM          Kraut, A

Physical diseases are biological realities--a pathogen invades our body and destroys organs; a vital substance is missing from our diet and our energy is sapped. Still, there is often a lack of agreement in our diverse society and culture about how to define particular diseases, how to treat them, and how much the community may infringe upon individual rights to protect the public health, for example, the debate over influenza prevention and control. This course treats the perennial battle between individual liberty and the public's interest in the health and well being of the broader community, including discussion of mandatory vaccination, quarantine, fluoridation, etc.

### **Justice, Law, and Society**

#### **JLS-352 Psychiatry and the Law**

F 02:10PM 04:50PM      Schaler, J

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.

### **Jewish Studies**

#### **JWST-320-001 Museums and Memory: Israel and the United States**

W 02:10PM 04:50PM Spiegel, N

This seminar focuses on how museums interpret history and shape public and collective memory. Exploring topics in the modern Jewish experience, the course analyzes the process and politics of cultural creation. Themes include nationalism, immigration, and conflict as they appear in museums in both America and Israel.

#### **JWST-320-002 American Jewish Popular Culture**

TF 11:20AM 12:35PM Spiegel, N

This course examines the history of American Jewish popular culture in the twentieth century through the prisms of film and TV; food and leisure; music, theater, art and dance. The class analyzes the interplay between American and Jewish cultures, exploring topics such as urbanization, immigration, suburbanization, and globalization.

### **Literature**

#### **LIT-308-002 Contemporary American Poetry**

TF 12:45PM 02:00PM Voris, L

Beginning with an overview of the modernist tradition and its influence, this course surveys contemporary American experimental poetry from the 1960s to the present. The class studies the work of poets experimenting with the lyrical tradition, and a broad range of movements including the Objectivists, Beats, New York School and Language Poets. Critical issues are examined, such as what is at stake intellectually, politically, and culturally in the formal innovation of this new American poetry. Meets with LIT-608 002

#### **LIT-323-001 Ethnic Literatures of the United States : Post-Soul Aesthetics**

TF 03:35PM 04:50PM Leonard, K

This course examines the cultural legacy of the civil rights movement, its idealism, activism, and political radicalism exemplified, some would say, by soul music, for the literary and popular culture created by the African American artists who came of age in the 1970s and 1980s. The class explores the variety of ways these artists used irony, satire, introspection, and postmodern eclecticism to revise inherited definitions of freedom and equality in order to trouble the boundaries of blackness itself. Artists include Colson Whitehead, Spike Lee, Kara Walker, The Roots, Toni Morrison, Dave Chappelle, and Junot Diaz. Meets with LIT-623 001.

#### **LIT-346-001 Melodrama**

MTH 03:35PM 04:50PM,

TH 08:10PM 10:40PM Kakoudaki, D  
TH

In this class students develop a historical and theoretical framework for studying melodrama. Starting from the evolution of early film melodrama and its relationship to popular theater, the course traces the generic conventions of the mode in a diverse range of texts from classical

Hollywood formulas. Meets with LIT-646 001.

### **LIT-346-002 Film Noir**

TF 12:45PM 02:00PM  
W 02:10 04:50 Pike, D

This course studies perhaps the most influential of all Hollywood products, the film noir. Screenings represent a varied selection from a corpus of some 400 movies made between 1941 and 1958, plus some precursors and examples of "neo-noir" from recent decades. Class discussions examine each film on its own terms as well as for ways it can help define what film noir was, where it came from, why it caught on, and why it seems to be so important to us now, both in its original forms, and in the traces we see of it everywhere around us. Readings give background and context; they also offer a variety of critical approaches to and interpretations of the phenomenon of film noir in addition to readings of individual films. Meets with LIT-646 002.

### **Philosophy**

#### **PHIL-314 American Philosophy (3)**

TH 05:30PM 08:00PM Carr, R

The background and substance of American philosophy since colonial times. The role of philosophical ideas, European and indigenous, in the growth of American culture. Meets with PHIL-614. Usually offered alternate springs. Prerequisite: one introductory course in philosophy.

### **Sociology**

#### **SOCY-552 Sociology of Popular Culture**

TF 03:35PM 04:50PM 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**

#### **WGST-350-001 Voices of Women: On Intimacy, Family and Feminism**

M 05:30PM 08:00PM

Using both vintage and modern literature that blends cross-cultural views on the female growth cycle, this course examines the journey of woman, from mother-daughter bonds to traditional marriage and gay partnerships to motherhood. While studying the works of pioneering female authors, students are encouraged through journaling and discussion to sharpen their own voices on intimacy, family, and the development of feminism.

#### **WGST-350-002 International Feminism**

MTH 02:10PM 03:25PM Krasnow, I

This course explores feminist movements in the Eastern hemisphere. The course concentrates primarily on movements in Africa, East Asia, South East Asia, and South Asia. A major focus of the course is comparing and contrasting these movements with their Western counterparts.