

American Studies 101: “America” as Idea Introduction to American Studies

<p>Instructor Dr. Allan Punzalan Isaac apisaac@rci.rutgers.edu Office: RAB 205 D Office Hours: Mon 12:30-1:30pm</p> <p>Dr. Andy Urban aturban@rci.rutgers.edu Office: RAB 016 Office Hours: Mon 1:30-3:30pm</p>	<p>Class: M/Th 10:55am-12:15pm Classroom: Ruth Adams Building 001</p> <p>Note: Emails relating to the course will only be answered Monday through Thursday. Please allow for at least 24 hours while waiting for a response.</p>
<p>Course Description:</p>	
<p>This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of American Studies. Employing literature, essays, law, film, history, visual culture, philosophy, and politics, the class will examine the concept of “America” in its global, national, community, and bodily/psychic permutations. Students will engage with primary and secondary sources of all kinds dealing with history, literature, culture, law, race, gender and sexuality. The goal of the course is to expose students to intellectual and creative possibilities in the field of American Studies, as well as providing incoming majors with key concepts and analytical tools to prepare them for more advanced courses. Emphasis will be placed on students’ analytical skills, close reading, and verbal articulations of interdisciplinary scholarship.</p>	
<p>Learning Goals:</p>	
<p>Departmental learning Goals met by Course</p>	<p>Students will be able to understand key concepts in American Studies and synthesize an interdisciplinary dialogue among the different disciplinary methodologies that compose American Studies investigation of American culture across time and space in the history, politics, literature, and arts of the peoples of the United States, as well as the Americas. Students will endeavor to write concisely, speak articulately; and think critically and creatively.</p>
<p>Any additional Learning Goals met by course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to multiple American histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies. • Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of varied American realities, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production

<p>Current Academic Integrity Policy http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml</p> <p>Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.</p> <p>Honor Pledge: I pledge on my honor that I will adhere to all aspects of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy</p>	<p>Take interactive tutorial on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity, http://sccweb.scc-net.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/Intro.html</p> <p>Consult Don't Plagiarize: Document Your Research! For tips about how to take notes so you don't plagiarize by accident. http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml</p>
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Readings: Approximately 80 pages/week. More some weeks. *I call on people during lecture.*

A) Articles®: on SAKAI Resources marked by ®; **I recommend that you bring PRINTED READINGS TO CLASS.**

B) Texts for Purchase at Rutgers Bookstore

1) Horace McCoy, *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* - noir novel set in the Great Depression. Focuses on a dance marathon in which many of the couples participating do so simply because there is free food, and a chance for exposure since a Hollywood producer is rumored to be present. Serpent's Tail (June 1, 1995)

ISBN: 9781852424015

2) Andrew Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* - connecting environmental history to the transformation of the American landscape, industrialization, the displacement and removal of American Indians, and to the idea of how the West continues to matter symbolically. Cambridge University Press 2001 Paperback

ISBN: 0521003482

3) Nella Larsen, *Passing* in Quicksand and Passing (1929), Rutgers University Press- Harlem Renaissance Novel

ISBN: 0813511704

C) Films: Get access via Netflix or via web: *Pretty in Pink* (John Hughes, dir.); *Paris is Burning* (documentary)

Requirements: Active reading, listening, and participation (including short exercises) in lecture-discussion. Please note again: I call on people.

Activities and Grading Summary:

[1] 2 scheduled examinations: 20% each = 40%

[2] 1 at-home assignment: 20%

[3] Final examination: 25%

[4] Class attendance and participation, including 3 inquiry QUIPS (Question, Issue, Problem) according to groups (A-D): 15%

The professor reserves the right to give impromptu quizzes during the semester.

This is a lecture-discussion course. Attendance and participation are important in our work in the course. You are allowed 3 absences for any reason whatsoever; **each** subsequent absence will result in a 3-point deduction in the final. Repeated excessive lateness (>15min) will count as absences. Excuse notes are unnecessary.

- All special accommodation requests must be brought to my attention the first two weeks.
- All cell phones and hand-held devices must be turned off.

Students are asked to engage in all class discussions, if not with commentary through QUIPS on the readings, certainly by asking questions. Although this is a lecture course, it is designed for intellectual exchange: every student is responsible for reading and preparing the assigned texts *before* class meetings.

All exams and assignments must be turned in on time; no material will be accepted late. Students will be docked a whole grade per day that the assignment is late

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

Grading Scale: Note: there are no “minus-grades” at Rutgers.

92-100=**A**; 87-91=**B+**; 81-86=**B**; 77-80=**C+**; 70-76=**C**; 60-69=**D**; 0-59=**F**

1) Participation and Inquiry QUIPS: In order to facilitate discussion each student, according to the assigned group (A-D) as shown above, will post via SAKAI in the DISCUSSION thread section a comment (Question Issue or Problem) by midnight on the next day’s assigned reading. This brief QUIP (4 sentences) brings up a question, an issue, or connections, that relates to the reading/film of the week. I call on people during lecture. Students must listen actively and respect each other: 15%

2) Local historical monument research: For your at-home assignment, in which you will analyze the history and meaning of a local hometown site or monument, please plan on photographing the site that you are interpreting. An image of your monument or place, along with a selection from the written portion of the assignment, will be posted online in the form of a class exhibit. Images should be emailed to Professor Urban as an attachment. If you do not have a camera, please let us know and we will arrange for you to borrow this equipment.

2) **Optional Credits:** up to 15 points max for the semester added to either exam or final, whichever is lowest

a) Outside Lecture: **5 points addition** max (**2** for simply attending, plus **3** more if you write a short coherent paragraph about the event relating to theme(s) in the course) to lower-scored exam.

b) **10 points max addition** to lowest exam:

Voluntary 7-10 minute class presentation of a local monument as a cultural text or a cultural artifact (youtube clip, film, art, text, newspaper article) as example of America as Global, Imperial, National, Community, Racial, Ethnic, Body or Psychic IDEA. Presentation will consist of a short PowerPoint presentation, plus five questions and answers to be handed to me. Meet with either professor to discuss idea and to schedule presentation.

Note: All extra credit must be completed by NOV 22.

Office hours:

Students are strongly advised to consult with the professor about any problems that might arise regarding any text, class discussion and the like. **Office hours are Mondays after class or by appointment.** Do not save questions for the session before exams or when essays are due.

Academic Integrity: Except for collaborative assignments officially approved by the instructor in advance, all

work that a student submits must be his/her own independent effort. Students must cite properly all outside sources consulted in preparing written assignments. Students should review the university policy on Academic Integrity (see the website for the Office of Student Judicial Affairs):

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

The Writing Program maintains a website that defines and discusses plagiarism:

http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/201/plagiarism_policy/.

This site clarifies many issues regarding the University's policy on academic integrity. Failure to comply with this policy can result in failure of the course. This course will require supplementary research. Remember that:

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. (from University Regulations)

Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the professor. For information on proper documentation, consult "Acknowledging Sources," the guide prepared by the Rutgers American Studies Department, which is available online. If you have further doubts regarding citation, please consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (6th Ed. or later) to resolve any problem. The Department has a copy available for reference.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Monday	Thursday
INTRO Sept 2	X	INTRO: The American Confessional: Oprah; Jerry Springer, Wendy Williams
Week 1 America as Idea Sep 8, 9 Note change: No CLASS on Sept 6	1. Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741) 2. Declaration of Independence in Jefferson's Autobiography (1829) [®] Concept: America as Document	1. Anderson: "Imagined Communities" [®]
Week 2 Sep 13, 16	Smith, "Can American Studies Develop a Method?" [®] Concept: America as Scholarship QUIP GROUP A	At the University: Conduct and Writing
Global America Week 3 Sep 20, 23	Naomi Klein, "Blank is Beautiful," [®] Concept: America and the Remaking of the World	1. Linda Kintz, "God Goes Corporate," [®] 2. Slavoj Zizek, "Biopolitics: Between Terry Schiavo and Guantanamo," [®] Concept: American Cultures of God and Life QUIP GROUP B
Nation/Expansion Week 4 Sep 27-30	Stephanson, "Destinies" and "Blessings" 28-32, 66-88 [®] QUIP GROUP C Concept: The Sacred-Secular Project	Frederick Jackson Turner, "Significance of the Frontier" (1893) [®]
Week 5 Oct 4, 7	Bederman, "Theodore Roosevelt: Manhood, Nation, and Civilization" [®] QUIP GROUP D Concept: America as Civilization	Speaker: Prof. Louise Barnett, Images of War Vietnam and Iraq
Week 6 Oct 11, 14	EXAM 1 (material up to Oct 7)	Isenberg, 1-30 Group A
Week 7 Oct 18, 21	Isenberg, 123-163 Concept: Americas as Natural and Man- Made Environment	Isenberg, 164-198 GROUP B

Community/Race Week 8 Oct 25, 28	Micki McElya's "Commemorating the Color Line: The National Mammy Monument Controversy of the 1920s," [®] Concept: Symbol GROUP C	Trachtenberg, "Brooklyn Bridge as a Cultural Text" [®] Speaker: Prof. Angus Gillespie on Monuments
Week 9 Nov 1, 4	Devon Carbado, "Racial Naturalization," [®] Concept: America as Racial Community GROUP D	Larsen, <i>Passing</i> , Section 1 GROUP A
Week 10 Nov 8, 11	Larsen, <i>Passing</i> , Section 2 and 3	EXAM 2: Material to Nov 8
Week 11 Nov 15, 18	FILM: <i>Pretty in Pink</i> (1986) Concept: Class and Romantic Tropes	FILM: <i>Pretty in Pink</i> (1986) Concept: Class and Romantic Tropes GROUP B
Body/Psyche Week 12 Nov 22, 25 NO CLASSES	Wednesday Schedule at Rutgers, NO CLASS	Thanksgiving NO CLASS
Week 13 Nov 29, Dec 2	McCoy (ch. 1- 7) Concept: Celebrity GROUP C	McCoy (ch. 8 to conclusion) NOTE: 3- to 4-page analysis of history and meaning of monument or place, or establishment DUE
Week 14 Dec 6, 9	1. Speaker: Dr. Ben Sifuentes-Jauregui on Sexuality and Race Article: Butler, <i>Gender is Burning</i> Film: <i>Paris is Burning</i> (71 min) Concept: Gender	Article: Butler, <i>Gender is Burning</i> Film: <i>Paris is Burning</i> (71 min) GROUP D
Week 15 Dec 13	TBA Review	FINAL EXAM scheduled for Dec TBA