

## Wayward Americans: Rebels, Vigilantes, and Social Outcasts

Wednesdays, 5:35 – 6:55PM  
Ruth Adams Building, Room 208

Professor Andrew Urban  
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Office: **Ruth Adams Building 205**  
Office Hours: **Wednesdays, 1-3 PM and by appointment**

\* Please email me in advance if you plan on coming by during office hours.

### Course Description

This course examines the expectations that Americans have placed on political, social, cultural, and economic behavior, and how the violation of established norms in these different arenas has led to ostracization, conflict, and repression. We will explore “wayward” actions committed by Americans as both the consequence of different forms of exclusion, and as the conscious resistance against the dominant order. Through an engagement with scholarly texts, novels, film, advertising, art, and music, we will explore how definitions of what constitutes wayward behavior have changed over time, and continue to change. In addition, we will analyze how outsider statuses have informed and relate to the construction of racial, sexual, class, and gendered identities. Finally, we will grapple with the converse of waywardness: obedience, normalcy, and the maintenance of hegemony. What has it meant, historically and in the present, to fulfill expectations and to conform to “normal” social behavior? Is anyone really free to be whom they want to be?

### Readings

**PLEASE BRING ALL READINGS TO CLASS. The failure to bring readings to class can result in deductions from your participation grade.**

- ✓ Gore Vidal, *Burr: A Novel* (Vintage, 2000), ISBN: 0375708731
- ✓ Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford University Press, 2010), ISBN: 0199772355
- ✓ Elliot Gorn, *Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (Hill and Wang, 2002), ISBN: 0809070944
- ✓ James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Penguin Books, 2001), ISBN: 0141186356
- ✓ Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), ISBN: 0226260127
- ✓ Alan Moore, *Watchmen* (DC Comics, 1995), ISBN: 0930289234

In addition to the above books, there are also individual chapters, articles, and primary sources that have been posted as .pdf files on the course's SAKAI site, under the heading "Resources" (the readings appear on the syllabus followed by a \*). **You are required to bring a copy of these readings to class for the week they have been assigned.**

### **Assignment and Grading Summary**

- *Reading Quizzes (averaged from four quizzes) – 10%*
  - During the semester, you will be given four unannounced reading comprehension quizzes. These brief quizzes will be designed to assess whether you are completing the required readings for that class meeting, and paying attention to important details in the text(s).
- *Midterm Exam – 15%*
  - Your midterm exam will take place during our normal class period, on Monday, Oct. 29.
- *Final Exam – 20%*
  - Your final exam is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 20, from 4 to 7PM. Please note that I did not select this date, nor do I control its scheduling.
- *Response Papers (averaged from the three you will complete) – 15%*
  - Response papers should be between 500 and 750 words in length. In a concise fashion, they should highlight the readings' main arguments, the evidence used by the author, and your own personal assessment of the readings' successes and failures in getting across the author's or authors' main points. Your response papers should also highlight connections to other texts, classroom discussions, and the overarching themes of the course that we will return to throughout the semester, where possible. If you choose to write a response paper during the weeks when we are reading novels or other fictional works in class, your paper should aim to provide a critical interpretation and use evidence from the text to support the points you want to make. Similarly, if your response paper focuses on a week in which we are reading primary sources, you should aim to interpret what these original documents say about labor radicalism, student activism, etc., in the era in which they were produced.

You are required to complete 3 response papers before the end of the semester. It is up to you to choose when you want to do each paper. In order to receive credit and a grade, you must turn-in a printed, hard-copy paper prior to start of class.

- *In-Class Participation* – 10%
- *Final Assignment* – 30%

- Your final assignment is to complete a “digital essay,” which will be compiled alongside your classmates’ work on a website – **American Waywardness** – that I will be creating. The goal is to create a digital encyclopedia of waywardness covering a wide-range of topics, individuals, and groups. To this end, you will complete a case study on the wayward American or Americans of your choosing. In addition to researching your subject using secondary sources, you will also be required to use at least three primary, archival sources in this assignment. (Please stay tuned for additional details on this assignment.)

- Abstract and Bibliography (5%)
- Final Essay (25%)

### **Grading Scale:**

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

**Note:** there are no minus grades at Rutgers.

### **Attendance / In-Class Policies**

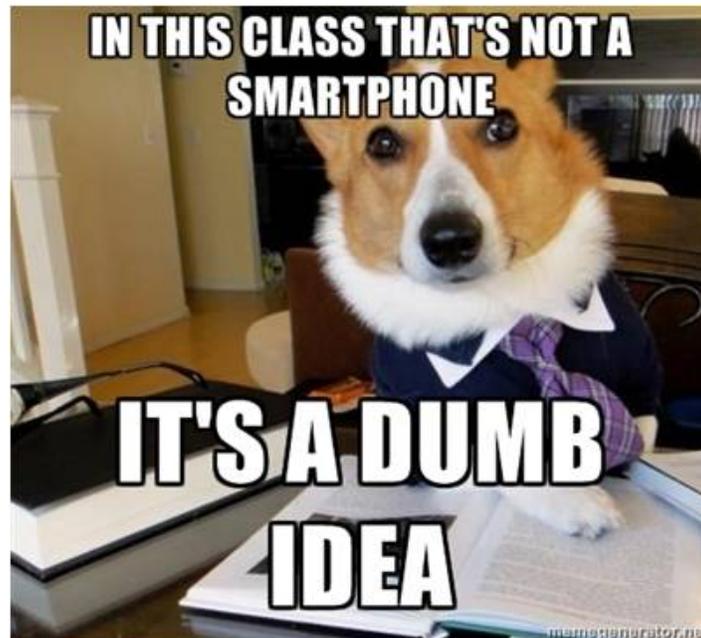
This is a discussion seminar. **Students are expected to attend all classes.** Attendance and participation are crucial to your success in the course. You are allowed one unexcused absence for any reason whatsoever; each subsequent absence will result in a 3-point deduction from the grade on your final exam and will lower your participation grade as well. If you continually turn up late to class, you will be marked absent. In addition, please note that if a reading quiz is administered during a class you miss, unless the absence is excused, you will receive a zero on that quiz.

If you have to miss class due to sickness, an emergency, or another excused reason, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

All cell phones and hand-held devices must be turned off prior to the start of class. **NO TEXTING** – if I catch you texting, you will be counted as absent that class.

**NO COMPUTERS ARE ALLOWED IN THE SEMINAR.** I have found time and time again that computers distract from discussions and provide too many temptations in terms of email, web-surfing, and so on.

Unexcused late assignments will receive a deduction.



Department Learning Goals Met by this Course:

Students will learn to synthesize interdisciplinary sources and methods of analysis in order to conduct an 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 be able to write well; speak articulately; and think critically, analytically, and creatively.

Learning Goals Specific to this Course:

- a) To assess what it means to be “wayward,” and evaluate in what ways traditions, norms, and expectations have governed the behavior of American individuals, groups, and institutions.
- b) To offer a detailed, nuanced, and sustained analysis of how behavior has been defined both normatively, and through radical and alternative perspectives.
- c) To understand how the concept of waywardness is historical and contingent, has changed over time, and relates to different ideologies.

## **Academic Policies**

Please review the following policies. Should a situation arise where a violation occurs, it will be assumed that you were aware of this information and its ramifications.

### **Special Accommodation Requests**

All special accommodation requests must be brought to my attention during the first two weeks of class. Full disability policies and procedures are available for review at: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

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

Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.

### **Honor Pledge**

I pledge on my honor that I will adhere to all aspects of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy

Take an interactive tutorial on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

<http://sccweb.scc-net.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/Intro.html>

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](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml)

## Class Schedule

Week 1: Sept. 5, 2012

### **Introduction**

Week 2: Sept. 10 & 12, 2012

### **Monday**

- Dick Hebdige, “Introduction: Subculture and Style,” & “From Culture to Hegemony,” in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Routledge, 1979), 1-19.\*
- Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery,” in *The Lottery and Other Stories* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001 [1948]), 291-302.\*
- Miranda Joseph, “Community,” in *Keywords for American Studies* (NYU Press, 2007), 57-60.\*

### **Wednesday**

- Vidal, *Burr*, 3-51.

Week 3: September 17 & 19, 2012

### **Monday**

- Vidal, *Burr*, 51-137.

### **Wednesday**

- Vidal, *Burr*, 138-287.

Week 4: September 24 & 26, 2012

### **Monday**

- Vidal, *Burr*, 288-376.

### **Wednesday**

- Vidal, *Burr*, 377 - end.
- Amy S. Greenberg, “A Gray-Eyed Man: Character, Appearance, and Filibustering,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 20 (Winter 2001): 673-99.\*

Week 5: October 1 & 3, 2012

**Monday**

- Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, Introduction & Part I.

**Wednesday**

- Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, Part II.

Week 6: October 8 & 10, 2012

**Monday**

- Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, Part III.

**Wednesday**

- Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, Part IV & Conclusion

Week 7: October 15 & 17, 2012

**Monday**

- Gorn, *Mother Jones*, Introduction, chapters 1-3

**Wednesday**

- Gorn, *Mother Jones*, chapters 4-6

Week 8: October 22 & 24

**Monday**

- Gorn, *Mother Jones*, chapters 7 & 8

*Primary Sources – On SAKAI*

“Anarchism: What It Really Stands For” (1911) / Emma Goldman

“Speech to Striking Coal Miners” (1912) / Mother Jones

“War in Paterson” (1913) / John Reed

**Wednesday**

- Gorn, *Mother Jones*, chapters 9, 10, & epilogue

Week 9: October 29 & 31

**Monday**

Midterm Exam

**Wednesday**

No Reading – In-Class Activity, “The Sounds of Difference”

Week 10: November 5 & 7

**Monday**

- Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*, TBA.

**Wednesday**

- Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*, TBA.

Week 11: November 12 & 14, 2012

**Monday**

- Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*, TBA.

**Wednesday**

- Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*, TBA.
- Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 3 (1997): 437-65.\*

Week 12: November 19, 2012

**Monday**

No Reading – In-Class Film, “The Weather Underground” (2002), Directed by Sam Green and Bill Siegel

**Wednesday**

No Class – Enjoy the Holiday Weekend

Week 13: November 26 & 28

**Monday**

*Primary Sources – On SAKAI\**

“One Dimensional Man” (1964) / Herbert Marcuse  
“What We Want, What We Believe” (1966) / The Black Panther Party  
“No More Miss America!” (1968) / Robin Morgan  
“Letter from Delano” (1969) / Cesar Chavez  
The Weather Underground: Communique #1 (1970)  
The Combahee River Collective Statement (1977)

**Wednesday**

- Frank, *The Conquest of Cool*, Chapters 1, 4, 7, 10 & 11

Week 14: December 3 & 5, 2012

**Monday**

- Moore, *Watchmen*, Chapters 1-3

**Wednesday**

- Moore, *Watchmen*, Chapters 4-8

Week 15: December 10 & 12, 2012

**Monday**

- Moore, *Watchmen*, Chapters 9-end

**Wednesday**

*No-Reading – Final Thoughts and Conclusions*