

American Studies, 050:227
19th Century American Literature and Culture

Mondays, 10:20AM to 1:20PM
Ruth Adams Building, Room 105

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Office Hours by Appointment, Online or In-Person
he/him pronouns



Alfred Copestick, "New York from the Harbor Showing the Battery and Castle Garden," 1858

Overview

This course introduces students to American history, literature, and culture from the long-nineteenth century (1783 to 1918). Topics that this course explores include: Atlantic World revolutions and the birth of American nationalism; the emergence of middle-class domesticity, the market economy, and the mass mobilization of wage labor; the search for a distinct and “authentic” American literature; the everyday cultural rituals and social activities of Americans; immigration and nativism; race and slavery; westward expansion, overseas imperialism, and the displacement and removal of indigenous peoples; the rise of industrial capitalism; the construction of gendered roles and spheres; and, the rise of mass entertainment and popular culture.

We will focus on literary sources such as novels, poetry, autobiographical writings, and journalism, as well as cultural texts such as songs, paintings, sculpture, theater, and vaudeville. To contextualize these sources, we will read scholarly analysis that interpret the social and political meanings that informed nineteenth-century cultural production and how works of culture were received and consumed by the public. Finally, we will also explore how writers and filmmakers from the present and recent past have sought to recreate the nineteenth century in period pieces, adaptations, and works of historical fiction.

Required Readings

The required books for this course are available for purchase through the bookstore and through numerous online vendors. They can also be acquired through the libraries. I recommend that you use a hard copy version of the books. Citations to digital versions of this text will not be accepted in course assignments.

- Julius S. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (Verso, 2020), ISBN #: 9781788732482.
- Henry James, *Washington Square* (Penguin Book, 2007 [1880]), ISBN #: 9780141441368.

The remaining course readings will be available either as pdfs in the “Files” section of our Canvas site, in the folder labeled “Readings,” or linked to in the syllabus. You are not required to print out pdf readings, although you may find it useful to do, but please keep in mind that you need to have either a digital or hard copy version of readings available in class.

COVID Protocols and Regulations

For the fall 2022 semester, Rutgers is requiring that faculty and students wear masks in all classrooms.

If you are feeling ill or sick, please do not attend class in person. I can work with you to catch up via Zoom. (Even before Covid, it was not a great idea to attend class while sick. Practice self-care!) Throughout these challenging times, I have tried to be understanding and accommodating, and I will continue to do so. I just ask that you communicate with me so that we can come up with appropriate contingency plans.

For the latest information and updates on Rutgers' various policies and regulations concerning Covid-19, please consult: <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/>.

Assignment and Grading Summary:

Additional assignment details and instructions will be provided in separate documents.

Midterm Exam – 20% (take-home, to be completed the week of October 24)

Final Exam – 25% (take-home, due Wednesday, December 21)

Three Response Papers/Class Questions – 45% (15% each)

- Class will be divided into two groups, A & B. The class schedule in this syllabus indicates which group is to turn in a response paper for class. See assignment instructions for additional details.

Participation and engagement – 10%

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.

School of Arts and Science Degree Requirements Met by this Course:

Students will learn to:

- Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies. [AHp]



American Studies Department Learning Goals Met by this Course:

Students will learn to:

- Critically analyze interdisciplinary primary and secondary sources relating to the nineteenth century United States.
- Interpret primary and secondary sources in their broader social, economic, and political contexts.
- Gain insights into how nineteenth-century American cultural and social forms departed from earlier periods and anticipated subsequent eras.
- Write well; speak articulately; and think critically, analytically, and creatively.

Class Policies:

Class Announcements:

Please make sure that you are receiving and reading Canvas announcements. All important information related to class will be sent out through Canvas. You are responsible for knowing the information and instructions posted to Canvas.

Special Accommodation Requests:

All special accommodation requests should be brought to my attention during the first two weeks of class. Full policies and procedures are available for review at:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu>.

Academic Integrity Policy:

<https://nbprovost.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-students>

The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.
- make sure that all work submitted as their own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration.

- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with their interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which they are preparing.

Any violation of academic integrity is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate sanction or penalty. If you are unsure about whether something might violate Rutgers' academic integrity policy - please ask me for clarification!

Honor Pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I will adhere to all aspects of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy and to Rutgers policies concerning bullying, intimidation, and harassment (<https://policies.rutgers.edu/10211-currentpdf>).

By accepting this syllabus and enrolling in this course, you assume responsibility for knowing the above policies and the possible penalties - including suspension and expulsion - should you violate them.

Union Statement:

Faculty at Rutgers University are currently working without a contract. Information on collective bargaining and what we are fighting for, and what we think you deserve as students, can be found here: <https://rutgersaaup.org/contract-2022-resource-center/>.

Class Schedule and Readings

September 12 - Introductions; Definitions; Close Reading Activity

- Michel Rolph Trouillot, "An Anniversary in the Making," from *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1995), 119-124.

PRIMARY

- Willa Cather, "The Sculptor's Funeral," *McClure's Magazine*, 24 (January 1905): 329-336.

September 19 - Creating American Identities, American Cultures?

- Jill Lepore, "A Nue Merrykin Dikshunary," in *The Story of America: Essays on Origins* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 111-129.
- Linda Kerber, "The Paradox of Women's Citizenship in the Early Republic: The Case of *Martin vs. Massachusetts*, 1805," *American Historical Review* 97, no. 2 (1992): 349- 378
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "The Truth About Squire Romolee," *New York Times*, November 28, 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/28/opinion/the-truth-about-squire-romolee.html> (READ ONLINE)

PRIMARY

- Thomas Jefferson, "Declaration of Independence," from *The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson* (1821)

Selections from [*The American Yawp Reader*](#):

- Abigail and John Adams Converse on Women's Rights, 1776
- David Walker's Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World, 1829
- Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" 1852

September 26 - The Revolutionary Atlantic

- Scott, *The Common Wind*, Foreword, Preface, chapters 1 - 2 (you're encouraged to read chapter 3 as well, but it is not required)

October 3 - The Revolutionary Atlantic, continued (A)

- Scott, *The Common Wind*, chapter 5, epilogue (you are encouraged to read chapter 4 as well, but it is not required)

PRIMARY

- Olaudah Equiano Describes the Middle Passage, 1789 (*American Yawp Reader*)
- Boston King recalls fighting for the British and securing his freedom, 1798 (*American Yawp Reader*)
- Harriet Jacobs, excerpts from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Written by Herself, 1861 (*Documenting the US South*)

October 10 - The Market Revolution (B)

- Naomi Reed, "The Specter of Wall Street: 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' and the Language of Commodities," *American Literature* 76, no. 2 (2004): 247-273.

PRIMARY

- Herman Melville, "Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story Of Wall-street," *The Piazza Tales* (1856)

In-class film screening, *Bartleby*, directed by Jonathan Parker, 2001

October 17 - Labor Under Capitalism (A)

- Jeremy Zallen, "Piney Lights," in *American Lucifers: The Dark History of Artificial Light, 1750-1865* (University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 57-93.
- David Montgomery, "Workers' Control of Machine Production in the 19th Century," *Labor History* 17, no. 4 (1976): 485-509.

PRIMARY

- Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron Mills" (1861)
- Winslow Homer, "Bell-Time," *Harper's Weekly*, July 25, 1868
- Robert Koehler, "The Strike," 1886
- Nicholas Ciotola, "Philadelphia to the Pinelands: The New Jersey Photographs of Lewis W. Hine," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 137, no. 2 (2013): 179-190.

EXAM REVIEW SESSION - FRIDAY, OCT 21, ZOOM

October 24 - MIDTERM EXAM - TAKE HOME

October 31 - Death, Mourning, and Ghosts (B)

- Thomas Bender, "The 'Rural' Cemetery Movement: Urban Travail and the Appeal of Nature," *The New England Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (1974): 196-211.
- Drew Gilpin Faust, "'The Dread Void of Uncertainty': Naming the Dead in the American Civil War," *Southern Cultures* 11, no. 2 (2005): 7-32.
- Tiya Miles, "Chloe and Cleo Louisiana Plantation Phantoms," in *Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 80-114.

PRIMARY

- Ambrose Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (1890)

In-class film screening, *Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, directed by Robert Enrico, 1961.

November 7 - Settler Colonialism and Imperialism (A)

- Claudio Saunt, "Financing Dispossession: Stocks, Bonds, and the Deportation of Native Peoples in the Antebellum United States," *Journal of American History* 106, no. 2 (2019): 315-337.
- Daniel Immerwahr, "How the US has hidden its empire," *The Guardian*, February 15, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/15/the-us-hidden-empire-overseas-territories-united-states-guam-puerto-rico-american-samoa> (READ ONLINE)

PRIMARY

- Victor Gillam, "The White Man's Burden," *Judge*, 1899
- William James on "The Philippine Question," 1903 (American Yawp)
- African Americans Debate Enlistment, 1899 (American Yawp)
- William T. Hornady on the Extermination of the American Bison, 1889 (American Yawp)
- Laura C. Kellogg on Indian Education, 1913 (American Yawp)

November 14 – Recreation, Commerce, and Popular Culture (B)

- William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-28.
- Eric Lott, “Blackface and Blackness: The Minstrel Show in American Culture,” from *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- Nan Enstad, “Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in ed. Stanley Aronowitz and Michael Roberts, *Class: The Anthology* (2018).

PRIMARY

- Albert Bierstadt Paintings, Smithsonian American Museum of Art, <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/albert-bierstadt-410> (VIEW ONLINE)
- A collection of minstrel shows excerpted from *The Darkey Drama: A Collection of Approved Ethiopian Acts, Scenes, Interludes, Etc.*, 1867, Digital Public Library of America, <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/blackface-minstrelsy-in-modern-america/sources/1427> (READ ONLINE)
- Library of Congress Images, Coney Island, <https://www.brownstoner.com/history/coney-island-history-photos-vintage-dreamland-luna-park-brooklyn/> (VIEW ONLINE)

November 21 – NO CLASS THANKSGIVING WEEK

November 28 – The Gilded Age

- Henry James, *Washington Square*, chapters TBA.

December 5 – The Gilded Age, continued

- Henry James, *Washington Square*, chapters TBA.
- Mona Simpson, “Can She Be Loved? On *Washington Square*,” *New Yorker*, June 3, 2013, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/can-she-be-loved-on-washington-square> (READ ONLINE)

December 12 – EXAM REVIEW / WORKSHOPPING JAMES EXAM ESSAYS