

American Studies Fall 2025 Course Descriptions

050:101:01 - Introduction to American Studies (Aho or AHp)

Instructor: Isaac, Allan

Time: Monday/Thursday, 10:20am-11:40am

Location: RAB-001

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of American Studies. Addressing fictional literature, law, film, history, visual culture, popular culture, philosophy, and politics, this class will examine the concept and idea of “America” in its global, national, community, and individual bodily/psychic permutations.

The goal of the course is to expose students to intellectual and creative possibilities in the field of American Studies, and the ideas, concepts, and themes that have been central to how Americans understand themselves and the United States as a nation. This course will also provide incoming majors with key concepts and analytical tools that can be used in more advanced courses. Emphasis will be placed on students’ analytical skills, close reading practices, and critical thinking.

050:102:01 - Introduction to Race & Ethnicity (CCD)

Instructor: Chan-Malik, Sylvia

Time: Monday/Wednesday, 3:50pm-5:10pm

Location: LOR-020

How do we approach issues of race, ethnicity, and difference in our current moment of crisis? We live in arguably the most diverse and multicultural time in the nation’s history; yet expressions of “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” are being banned across the country. What are we talking about when we talk about “race” and “racism,” and how did “diversity” come to constitute a fighting word in today’s political climate? In this class, we will engage literature, films, popular culture, and digital media that shape American perceptions of race and racism, as well as examining how racial inequality and everyday forms of discrimination continue to inform our lives as Americans. This semester’s class will focus in particular on racial humor, and feature skits from SNL and the work of comedians such as Richard Pryor, Charlie Hill, Dave Chappelle, Margaret Cho, John Leguizamo, Ali Wong, Hasan Minhaj, Ziwe, and others.

050:240:01 - Latino Literature and Culture (AHO, WCr)

Instructor: Sifuentes-Jáuregui, Ben.

Time: Monday/Thursday, 10:20am-11:40am

Location: BE-221

Read texts by Mexican American, Chicano and Hispanic Caribbean Diasporic writers from the 1960s until 2010. Begins with the PBS documentary “Latinos in America” and Juan Flores’s work. Then focuses on close-reading of a selection of well-known texts from the Chicano tradition and of Nuyorican, Dominican American and Cuban American texts.

Topics addressed: border and hybrid identities, *mestizaje*, indigeneity, “la raza” and racialization, Spanglish and the limits of transculturation, the transformation of Latino gender and sexuality, and the subversion of internal colonialism in the creation of a new notion of American identity.

Cross-listed with 01:595:240:01

050:240:02 - Latino Literature and Culture (AHo, WCr)

Instructor: Zamora, Omaris

Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 3:50-5:10pm

Location: HH-A6

Read texts by Mexican American, Chicano and Hispanic Caribbean Diasporic writers from the 1960s until 2010. Begins with the PBS documentary “Latinos in America” and Juan Flores’s work. Then focuses on close-reading of a selection of well-known texts from the Chicano tradition and of Nuyorican, Dominican American and Cuban American texts.

Topics addressed: border and hybrid identities, *mestizaje*, indigeneity, “la raza” and racialization, Spanglish and the limits of transculturation, the transformation of Latino gender and sexuality, and the subversion of internal colonialism in the creation of a new notion of American identity.

Cross-listed with 01:595:240:02

050:245:01 - Asian American Experience (CCD)

Instructor: Ramsamy, Kavitha

Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 7:30-8:50pm

Location: LSH-A139

Thorough a variety of genres, including history, literature, film and popular culture, interrogate the fluid identity categories, the dynamic and diverse experiences, cultures, and politics of “Asian American”/ “Asian Pacific American”/ “Asian Pacific Islander American” peoples in the United States. *Cross-listed with 01:098:262:01*

050:246:01 - The Black Experience in America

Instructor: Westbrook, Randall

Time: Monday/Wednesday, 7:30-8:50pm

Location: LSH-A102

Offers an inter-disciplinary examination of the Black experience in the US focusing on the themes of acculturation, alienation, oppression and resistance. While the course surveys the Black experience from slavery to the present, the subject matter is not approached in a simple chronological manner. Issues and individuals discussed in the context of the struggle of African-Americans for political rights, economic justice and cultural accommodation. Begins with a brief look of the position of Africa and the fledgling United States in the emerging international economic order of the 15th and 16th centuries and how the enslavement of Africans related to economic and political processes of this era. Proceeds to examine the institutionalization of slavery in the United States and the subsequent struggles for emancipation. Attempts by African-Americans to gain socio-cultural equality and political and economic rights in the aftermath of the slave experience.

050:248:01 - Native American Experience (CCD, AHp)**Instructor: Sweet, Jameson****Time: Monday/Wednesday, 3:50-5:10pm****Location: FH-A6**

An introductory survey of Native American cultures, literature, history, language, and current issues that exposes students to approaches, theories, and important concepts such as colonialism and sovereignty in Native American Studies. This course focuses on themes of colonialism, racism, and federal Indian policy but especially Indian political activism, resistance, and cultural continuity and revitalization. Through oral histories, literature, and film, students will investigate thousands of years of Native American history, but with a focus on current issues in Indian Country. Students will analyze representations of Indian people in American popular culture and consider major shifts in the nature of Native American sovereignty into the present.

050:259:01 - Popular Culture (AHO or AHp)**Instructor: Moomjy, Thomas****Time: Monday/Wednesday, 2:00-3:20pm****Location: MU-115**

This class explores the history and current dynamics of American popular culture. We will analyze and discuss a wide array of movies, music videos, songs, literature, and art in an eGort to understand what makes popular culture popular, how it "works" (or does not work) in society, what kinds of meaning it generates, and how it is received by audiences. We will use a variety of scholarly models and theoretical literature to help make sense of cultural forms and productions that seem all too familiar but bear careful scrutiny. In addition, the course will give special attention to the decades of the 1980s and 1990s as a critical juncture at which a new politics and aesthetics of popular culture emerged.

050:263:01 - American Folklore (AHO or AHp)**Instructor: Kennedy, Maria****Time: Monday/Thursday, 12:10-1:30pm****Location: RAB-104**

The study of folklore examines social identity through the artistic practices of everyday life. Students will learn to analyze folklore in relation to expressive genres and cultural groups in North America. From Italian yard shrines to urban legends, from UFO abduction narratives to African American cuisine, from Inuit film to New York cider pressing, this course will explore how cultural traditions are being preserved, renewed, and created by communities in America today. In this course, students will be introduced to ethnographic methods of research, folkloristic theories of culture and social identity, and will critically engage with processes of cultural production. We will analyze texts and performances from artistic genres including narrative, belief, ritual, festival, and material culture. Students will employ the tools of ethnographic methodology and engage in analysis of narrative and performance through the completion of a fieldwork project.

050:265:01 - American Experimental Film & Video**Instructor: Nigrin, Albert****Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 5:40-7:00pm; Thursday, 7:30-8:50pm****Location: RAB-001**

Survey on the history and development of the various American experimental cinema movements from its beginnings to the present. In-depth analyses of the structure and content of films by Andy Warhol, Maya Deren, Stan Brakhage, Sidney Peterson, Kenneth Anger, Bruce Baillie, Yoko Ono, and others. Emphasis on the "mise-en-scene," editing, narrative form, sound, and special effects in the films of these celebrated experimental filmmakers. Warning: some films may contain nudity, sexual situations, violence, profanity, substance abuse, and disturbing images. *Cross-Listed with 01:175:265:01*

050:271:01 - Immigrant States: Jersey's Global Routes (CCD, SCL)**Instructor: TBA****Time: Monday/Wednesday, 3:50-5:10pm****Location: HCK-205**

The state of New Jersey ranks as one of the top destinations for immigrants to the United States, a distinction that it has held in both the past and the present. At the same time, New Jersey is also one of the most segregated states in the country and has frequently been the site of anti-immigrant politics, violence, and sentiment. This course investigates immigration to New Jersey through an interdisciplinary framework, and uses methods and sources from history, literature, film, sociology, political science, and ethnic studies to try and make sense of what it means to call New Jersey an "immigrant state." Using New Jersey as a case study, we will interrogate how the idea of the United States as a "nation of immigrants" has been constructed in popular and political discourse, and how race, class, gender, and sexuality have shaped immigrants' experiences. In the fall 2025, Immigrant States will include hands-on engagement with the [New Jersey Monuments to Migration and Labor](#) project, which is currently working with community stakeholders and partners to create public art and monuments that recognize immigrant laborers' contributions to the state.

050:272:01 – American Food, Past and Present (HST)**Instructor: Kennedy, Maria****Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 3:50-5:10pm****Location: HCK-201**

American food has been formed by the collision of people, animals, plants, recipes, and flavors from all over the globe. A history of encounters between Native Americans, enslaved Africans, and immigrants from around the world created a national cuisine that is as diverse and varied as its people, a process particularly visible in cross-cultural fusion foods such as Korean tacos. But these exchanges have also been the sites of inequality and oppression: from enslavement on sugar plantations in early America, to the brutal working conditions facing undocumented migrant food workers today. By moving chronologically through American food history, this course will introduce students to the contexts surrounding contemporary American food culture, including immigration, race, gender, industrialization, regional and ethnic food cultures, sustainability, wellness culture, food media, and celebrity.

050:282:02 - Topics: Asian American Identities and Images LLC

Instructor: Bhattacharya, Sudip

Time: Tuesday, 12:10-1:30pm

Location: TIL-209

The Asian American Images course serves as an exploration of Asian American identity, history, politics, and representation as it also relates to broader concepts such as capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. This course is divided between lecture and discussion.

050:284:MB – Topics: New Jersey Diners

Instructor: Morales, Lissette

Time: Thursday, 5:40-8:40pm

Location: SC-206

(NO DESCRIPTION)

050:300:01 – Topics: The Changing American Family

Instructor: Furman, Harry

Time: Tuesday, 3:00-4:40pm

Location: ACCC Mays Landing, Online (Asynchronous)

(NO DESCRIPTION)

050:301:82 – Topics: American Mythic Culture in the Disney Universe

Instructor: Furman, Harry

Time: Tuesday, 4:30-5:50pm

Location: ACCC Mays Landing, Online (Asynchronous)

(NO DESCRIPTION)

050:303:90 – The Decade in American Culture

Instructor: McElhinney

Time: Asynchronous

Location: Online

050:306:90 - American Detective Fiction and Film

Instructor: McElhinney

Time: Asynchronous

Location: Online

The detective, as a preeminent figure in all forms of American popular culture, has become the subject of a variety of theoretical exploration. By investigating that figure, this class will explore how the genre embodies all the contradictions of American society and the ways in which literature and the media attempt to handle those contradictions. Issues of class, gender, and race; the interaction of film and literature; and generic evolution are fundamental to any understanding of the American detective in all of his or her forms. Crime Fiction and Film flourished in the 20th Century. The genre birthed great masterpieces, haunting memoirs, the urban experience novel, and what is commonly (and now fashionably) known as "Pimp Lit." These crime narratives have influenced, provoked and inspired subsequent generations and reached beyond the world of books into cinema, TV, popular music, and society-at-large. While offering the action and thrills demanded of the crime genre, these texts also importantly give first-hand ethnographic 'ground-zero' accounts of lifestyles and communities extra to the mainstream. What is the intersection of crime, poverty, lack of education, and drugs? What are the responsibility and burdens of first responders? Is our legal system just? How is prison reform possible? What are values of public education? This class will explore and celebrate Crime Fiction and Film while also examining historical legal cases, decisions and transcripts that present a historical narrative parallel to the fictional development of the genre. Together, the class will seek to understand what these works say about identity, economy, politics, gender and race relations within the United States of America.

050:310:01 – Methods and Practices in American Studies (WCd)**Instructor: Sweet, Jameson****Time: Tuesday, 2:00-5:00pm****Location: RAB-109B**

This course introduces students to interdisciplinary methods and practices used in the field of American Studies. The goal of the course is to familiarize students with the central approaches to the field, and to encourage students to explore and apply these approaches in their own writing and research; every student should leave this class feeling prepared for more-advanced work.

050:316:01 - 21st Century Expression: On and Off the Net (Ahp, CC)**Instructor: Moomjy, Thomas****Time: Tuesday/Thursday, 5:40-7:00pm****Location: MU-204**

Can you imagine life without the internet? In spite of the seeming ubiquity of the so called "internet of things," over half the global population does not have reliable internet access. In other words, half of the world is "offline." This course will examine the implications of this digital divide—especially in light of the current global pandemic. We'll explore how the carryover of mass media from older forms migrates onto the internet and the emerging ways by which forms of expression, by both individuals and groups, form new communities and new identities. Finally, we'll consider how human interaction with new forms of technology impacts the future. These issues are fundamental to understanding differences among various groups (classes, ethnicities, genders, religions, generations, and more) and how people navigate information literacy in the 21st Century. Students are expected to show proficiency in research, reading, and writing. For our purposes, writing will include not only traditional academic essays, but online forms of expression including videos, audio, and social media.

050:323:90 – American Horror

Instructor: McElhinney

Time: Asynchronous

Location: Online

NO DESCRIPTION

050:324:01 - Wayward Americans

Instructor: Zemla

Time: Monday, 5:40-7:00pm

Location: RAB-104

In this class, we will explore our understandings of who or what is seen as “normal.” Among the questions we will consider are: have our definitions of “normal” Americans changed over time? By what criteria are we measuring normalcy? As we examine individuals and groups that have been described as different, weird, deviant, strange, abnormal, disobedient, or unnatural, we will seek to understand the historical, sociological, and psychological underpinnings that helped to shape the cultural norms from which these “wayward” groups are/were excluded. The course will include lectures, slides, films (fiction & non-fiction), readings, and in-class discussions.

050:324:82 - Wayward Americans

Instructor: Zemla

Time: Wednesday, 6:00-8:40pm

Location: BCC Lincroft

See description above.

050:355:01 - Museums, Monuments, and American Culture (AHp)

Instructor: Urban, Andrew

Time: Tuesday, Thursday, 3:50-5:10pm

Location: TIL-207

This course examines the place that museums and monuments have in American culture. It focuses on how acts of memorialization, commemoration, exhibition, and interpretation bring the humanities to the public, and the politics that surround how the past is remembered, and culture presented. With Americans debating what types of messages and values they want public monuments to impart, and how art and history museums can be made more inclusive to different groups and histories, so too will the course wrestle with these pressing contemporary concerns. In the fall 2025, Museums, Monuments, and American Culture will include hands-on engagement with the [New Jersey Monuments to Migration and Labor](#) project, which is currently working with community stakeholders and partners to create public art and monuments that recognize immigrant and migrant laborers' contributions to the state.

050:357:01 – American Bodies (CCD)**Instructor: Cevasco, Carla****Time: Monday/Thursday, 10:40-11:40pm****Location: RAB-109B**

Everybody has a body. Yet no two bodies are the same, and our bodies are constantly changing. We all inhabit bodies while bombarded with images of and ideas about bodies. How will our bodies change, or even continue to matter, in an increasingly digital world? What's the relationship between actual bodies and "ideal" bodies? What do bodies mean? This course examines the complexity of ideas about and experiences of the human body in American culture from early America to the present. We will consider disabled and ill bodies; reproducing, aging, and dead bodies; consuming, performing, and modified bodies; and digital bodies pushing the limits of technology. In so doing, we will learn the ways that these diGerent factors shape bodily experiences and contemporary issues. Students will learn to analyze cultural discourses about bodies and will finish the semester by completing a creative project inspired by course content.

01:050:377 – Asian-American Literatures in English**Instructor: Isaac, Allan****Time: Monday/Wednesday, 2:00-3:20pm****Location: ABE-3450**

Violence has the ability to destroy but also to recreate identities and subjects, both to tear away from and to stake claims to nations and places. How and why is violence a recurring theme in Asian American literature? From the Philippine-American War (1898) and the Pacific wars against Japan (1941), Korea (1950s) to the Vietnam War (1960s) and the War on Terror (2001) in the past century, conflicts in Asia have aGected Asians in the US from immigration exclusion laws (until 1965) and internment (1942) to refugee dislocation (1970s) and surveillance (post-9/11). The course will look at the literary representations, experiments to the narrative form, and reactions to diGerent types of violence emerging from colonial, familial, and race relations in Asian American novels and documentaries.

Cross-listed with 01:358:389

01:050:389 – Seminar in American Studies (WCr or WCd)**Instructor: Cevasco, Carla****Time: Monday, 12:10-3:10pm****Location: RAB-109B**

This course will examine the dynamic histories, cultures, and memories of Early America before 1865. Early America was a vast and complicated place where many diGerent peoples met for the first time. What challenges did these Early Americans face, and how do these challenges continue today? How has the memory of Early America been reinterpreted in our own time? All students will write an original research paper in order to practice advanced research, analysis, and writing in the field of American Studies.