

**American Studies 2200E:
Advanced American Studies
2016–17**

Thursdays 2:30–5:30 pm
Room TBD

Instructor: Professor Anna Zuschlag
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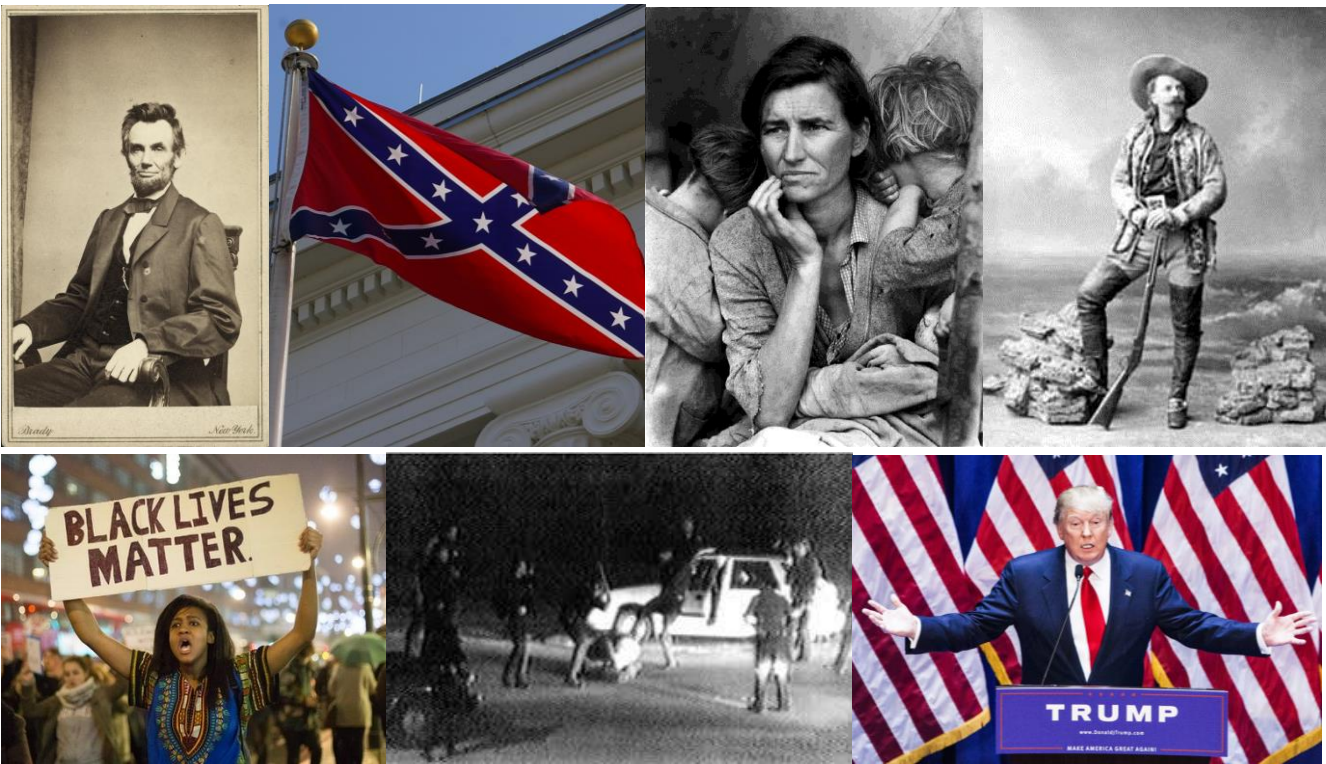


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Course Description:

This course explores the history, politics, and culture of the United States from multiple points of view. We will examine the theory and method of American Studies, and we will engage in our own interdisciplinary explorations of American society, values, regions and ideas. The class will not provide a comprehensive survey of U.S. history—instead, it highlights a number of places and moments in time where the meaning of “America” was constructed, contested or otherwise up for grabs. Our goal is to locate and define both “American Studies” as an academic field and “America” itself.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Class participation	20%
In-class presentations (2)	20%
Midterm test (in class, Nov. 17)	15%
Essay (due TBD, Winter 2017)	20%

Once per term, students will take turns giving **in-class presentations** on topics related to the readings for that week. Written summaries of the presentation (4–5 pages each), along with a list of sources, must be submitted at the same time. Students will also write one **essay** (13–15 pages) based on the required readings and additional research. Students will be required to submit a copy of their essays and presentation summaries to www.turnitin.com via OWL. There will be an **in-class midterm test** in November and a **final exam** during the April examination period. (Students are advised not to make any travel or other plans until the April examination dates are announced by the university.)

Further details for all assignments will be provided in class.

Marks will be deducted for assignments that are submitted after the due date and time, and for presentations that are not presented in class on the date assigned. The penalty for late assignments will be 5% for the first day, and 2% for each additional day, including weekend days. (Papers handed in on the due date but after the 2:30 pm deadline will be considered late and penalized 2%.) Extensions will be granted with acceptable medical (or other emergency-related) documentation only, which must be obtained through the office of Academic Counselling.

Please note that this course is designated as an “E” (Essay) course. According to Western University’s Academic Handbook, an essay course “must be so structured that the student is required to demonstrate competence in essay writing to pass the course.” This means that, in this course, **students are required to complete and submit all written assignments (essay and two presentation summaries), and to meet the minimum length requirements of each assignment, in order to pass the course.**

Class Format:

This is a seminar-style class. Each class session will usually consist of:

- Current events discussion;
- Lecture on the topic of the day;
- Class discussion based on the reading assignment;
- Student presentations and discussion;
- A brief introduction to the following week’s topic.

Active and informed involvement in class discussion is **crucial** in this course. **Class participation** will account for 20% of the final grade. Participation marks are based on:

- demonstrated fulfillment of the reading and other assignments;
- informed participation in weekly class discussions;
- attendance, punctuality and professional deportment. This includes treating other members of the class with respect, as well as not using electronic devices in class except for note-taking or for accessing assigned readings.

- In addition, you should be following events in the American media, either on TV or radio, in print, or online (e.g., CNN, MSNBC, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, etc.). Pay particular attention to how events are presented and portrayed by the media, and any connections with course themes. Be prepared to discuss your observations in class. At the start of each class, the instructor will list 2–3 current events or news stories and present them for class discussion. During the second term, students will take turns “collecting” significant news stories for class discussion each week. This task will be counted as part of your participation mark. The discussion of current events will be of particular import this year as the US is in a presidential election cycle.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the origins and evolution of the field of American Studies; identify key individuals involved in its development and explain their contributions to the field; and understand basic concepts, themes and terminology of American Studies.
- Begin to employ effectively an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the United States.
- Situate historical events, as well as contemporary issues, in the broader context of American Studies.
- Use both primary and secondary sources to interpret and analyze events and issues in American history and society.
- Identify recurring themes in American history, explain their origins and durability, and assess the role they play in American history and culture.
- Develop a research question and answer it in a written assignment, integrating both primary and secondary sources, and employing an interdisciplinary approach, in formulating the argument.
- Develop improved essay writing skills.
- Demonstrate improved presentation and communication skills through class discussion and presentations.

Required Texts:

The required texts for this course are:

- 1) **American Studies 2200E Course Pack**, available for purchase at the Western Bookstore.
- 2) ***Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline***, edited by Lucy Maddox. We will be reading a number of essays from this collection. It is recommended that you purchase this book from the Western bookstore, particularly if you will be continuing in American Studies. If you do not wish to buy it, however, all the articles in this collection can be found in the journal *American Quarterly*, which is available at Weldon Library and also online. As well, a copy of this book is available on reserve at Weldon, on two-hour loan. Even if you choose not to purchase the book, please note that the readings are mandatory.
- 3) **Additional readings** are available **online**, as indicated in the syllabus. These readings are also mandatory.

Laptops:

Be present! Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices while in class. If you choose to bring your laptop to class, it is to be used only for accessing course readings or for taking notes, not for e-mail, instant messaging, web surfing or other purposes. **Use of electronic devices, including laptops, in class for other than accessing**

course readings and taking notes will result in the deduction of participation marks. Electronic devices, including laptops, will not be allowed during exams.

Policy on Absences and Extensions:

Students should read carefully the Faculty of Social Science “Instructions for Students Registered in Social Science Who are Unable to Write Tests or Examinations or Submit Assignments as Scheduled.” They are appended to this syllabus. Pressures of work or computer/printer difficulties do not constitute acceptable reason for an extension.

If you require an extension or other type of academic accommodation, for either medical or non-medical reasons, contact Academic Counselling. Students are reminded that academic accommodation on medical grounds can in most instances only be granted if supported by a Western University Student Medical Certificate. This form can be picked up at the Academic Counselling Office in the student’s home faculty, or accessed at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf. Further detail on this policy can be found at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Statement on Academic Offences:

Per the UWO Academic Handbook: “Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.”

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious offence that can result in severe penalties. Please read the attached plagiarism policy. If you have any questions about this policy, proper citation styles to use in assignments, or any other related matters, please feel free to consult the instructor.

Students are advised to keep all research notes for all assignments until after they have obtained their final grade in the course.

Note: per the UWO Academic Handbook, "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.”

Essays and presentation summaries must be submitted both in hard copy to the instructor, and electronically via the assignment submission link on the course Owl Sakai website. (Owl will automatically submit your paper to Turnitin.)

Support Services:

- The website for the Western’s Office of the Registrar is: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.
- Western has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social, and academic needs of students, in a confidential environment.
 - The Student Development Centre (SDC) has trained staff and an array of services to help students achieve their personal, academic and professional goals. See: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>.
 - The Services for Students with Disabilities office (SSD) has staff members who specialize in assisting students with various disabilities to adjust to the university environment. See: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd>.
 - For information related to accessibility, including accessible routes, temporary service disruptions, and university policies related to accessibility issues, see: <http://accessibility.uwo.ca/students/index.html>

First Term

Week 1 September 8 What's American about America?

Readings:

- John Kouwenhoven, "What's American about America" ([to be distributed in class](#))

Week 2 September 15 America and Americans

From the Course Pack:

- H.L. Mencken, "On Being an American"

Online:

- J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, "Letter III from an American Farmer" (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/CREV/letter03.html>)
- Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174745>)
- Mark Twain, "What Paul Bourget Thinks of Us" (<http://www.readbookonline.net/read/469/10045/>)
- Langston Hughes, "I, Too" (<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15615>)

Week 3 September 22 The Old American Studies

From *Locating American Studies*:

- Henry Nash Smith, "Can American Studies Develop a Method?" *LAS*: 1–16 [or *American Quarterly*, 9:2 (Summer 1957): 197–208]
- Bruce Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies," *LAS*: 71–90 [or *AQ* 24:4 (October 1972): 435–50]

From the Course Pack:

- Ann Fabian, "Back to *Virgin Land*"

Online:

- Leo Marx, "American Studies: A Defense of an Unscientific Method," in *The New Literary History* 1:1 (October 1969) [[J-Stor](#)]

Week 4 September 29 The New American Studies

From *Locating American Studies*:

- Alice Kessler-Harris, "Cultural Locations: Positioning American Studies in the Great Debate," *LAS*: 335–52 [or *AQ* 44:3 (September 1992): 299–312]

From the Course Pack:

- Richard Horwitz, "Introduction to *The American Studies Anthology*"
- Alan Wolfe, "Anti-American Studies"

☞ **Presentation topics due!**

Week 5 October 6 Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1630–93

From the Course Pack:

- John Winthrop, "A Model of Christianity" (1630)
- Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Puritan Errand Reassessed" (1978)

Online:

- Samuel Eliot Morison, “Those Misunderstood Puritans” (1931) (<http://www.revisionisthistory.org/puritan1.html>) (skip the intro.; essay begins at, “There is no doubt that the Puritan is unpopular nowadays....”)
- Perry Miller, “Errand into the Wilderness,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 10:1 (January 1953) [J-Stor]

👉 **Presentations begin!**

Week 6 October 13 Virginia, 1676–1776

From the Course Pack:

- Thomas Jefferson, “A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America in General Congress Assembled.”
- Edmund Morgan, excerpts from *American Slavery, American Freedom*

Online:

- Thomas Jefferson, “Query XIV: Justice,” from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=514>)
- Frederick Douglass, Independence Day Speech at Rochester: “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=162>) (read the section subtitled “THE PRESENT”)

Week 7 October 20 New Orleans, 1814–60

From the Course Pack:

- Walter Johnson, excerpts from *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*
- George Fitzhugh, “Sociology for the South” (1854)
- Eugene Genovese, “Paternalism and Class Relations in the Old South”
- George Fredrickson, “The Role of Race in the Planter Ideology of South Carolina”

Online:

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, “Ch. XXX: The Slave Warehouse,” in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (<http://www.classicreader.com/book/1367/30/>)

Fall Study Break (October 27–28)

NO CLASS OCTOBER 27

Week 8 November 3 Seneca Falls, 1830–48

From *Locating American Studies*:

- Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–60,” *LAS*: 43–70 [or *AQ* 18:2 (Summer 1966): 151–74]

Online:

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “We Now Demand Our Right to Vote,” 19 July 1848 (http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/bl_1848_stanton1.htm) and “Declaration of Sentiments” (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/senecafalls.html>)

Week 9 November 10 New York City, 1834–65

From *Locating American Studies*:

- Alexander Saxton, “Blackface Minstrelsy and Jacksonian Ideology,” *LAS*: 114–42 [or AQ 27:1 (March 1975): 3–28]

From the Course Pack:

- Eric Lott, excerpts from *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*

Online:

- Frederick Douglass, “Gavitt’s Original Ethiopian Serenaders,” in *The North Star* (29 June 1849) (<http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/minstrel/miar03at.html>)

Week 10 November 17 IN-CLASS MIDTERM TEST

Week 11 November 24 Gettysburg, 1863

From the Course Pack:

- Tony Horwitz, excerpt from *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War*
- David W. Blight, “Quarrel Forgotten or a Revolution Remembered?”
- Steve Goodson, excerpt from *Highbrows, Hillbillies and Hellfire: Public Entertainment in Atlanta, 1880–1930*

Online:

- Abraham Lincoln, “The Gettysburg Address” (go to www.ourdocuments.gov and search for “Gettysburg Address” to access)

Week 12 December 1 Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, 1883–1917

From the Course Pack:

- Richard Slotkin, “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and the Mythologization of the American Empire”
- Garry Wills, “American Adam”

Online:

- Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/frontierthesis.html>)
- Patricia Limerick, “What on Earth Is the New Western History?” [J-Stor]

NO CLASS DECEMBER 8 (STUDY DAYS BEGIN)

Second Term

Week 13 January 5 Chicago, 1871–1906

From the Course Pack:

- Rudyard Kipling, “A Visitor’s View of Chicago”

Online:

- Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems* (<http://poetry.eserver.org/chicago-poems.txt>). In particular, look at the poems “Chicago,” “The Harbor,” “They Will Say,” “Mill-Doors” and “Sky Scraper.”
- John Coleman Adams, “What a Great City Might Be” (<http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/adams.htm>)

- Upton Sinclair, excerpt from *The Jungle* (http://www.online-literature.com/upton_sinclair/jungle/2/) (Chapter 2)

☞ **Presentation topics due!**

Week 14 January 12 Harlem, 1920–29

From the Course Pack:

- John Loughery, “Imagining the Twenties,” from *The Other Side of Silence: Men’s Lives and Gay Identities—a Twentieth Century History*
- George Chauncey, excerpt from *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940*

☞ **Presentations begin!**

Week 15 January 19 The Dust Bowl, 1931–39

From the Course Pack:

- James N. Gregory, excerpt from *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California*

Online:

- Woodie Guthrie, “So Long, It’s Been Good to Know Yuh (Dusty Old Dust)” (http://www.woodyguthrie.org/Lyrics/So_Long_Its_Been_Good.htm)

Week 16 January 26 Havana, 1959

From the Course Pack:

- Enrique Cirules, “Trade and Economic Strangulation,” from *The Mafia in Havana: A Caribbean Mob Story*

Week 17 February 2 The American Way of War: Vietnam, 1954–75 and Iraq, 1991 and 2003–11

From the Course Pack:

- William Lederer and Eugene Burdick, “Employment Opportunities Abroad,” from *The Ugly American*
- Loren Baritz, “God’s Country and American Know-How,” from *Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us Into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did*
- John Hellman, “‘An Angry Dream’: The Cold War, Southeast Asia, and the American Mythic Landscape,” from *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam*

Online:

- Richard Slotkin, “Unit Pride: Ethnic Platoons and the Myths of American Nationality,” in *American Literary History* 13:3 (Fall 2001): 469–98 [[J-Stor](#)]
- Nicholas Schmidle, “In the Crosshairs,” *New Yorker* magazine, 3 June 2013 (<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/06/03/in-the-crosshairs>)

Week 18 February 9 San Francisco, 1966–69

From the Course Pack:

- Tom Wolfe, excerpt from *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*
- Jeffrey A. Kotler, “Lenny Bruce”

Online:

- Allen Ginsberg, “Howl” and “America” (http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/allen_ginsberg/poems/8315) and (http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/allen_ginsberg/poems/8318)
- Jack Kerouac, excerpt from *On the Road* (www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/onroad.html)
- Abbie Hoffman, “The Night the Red Sox Attacked the U.S. Embassy.” (Available on course website under “Resources.”)

Week 19 February 16 Orange, Cobb and Johnson Counties: 1971–94

From the Course Pack:

- Lisa McGirr, excerpt from *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*
- Peter Appleborne, excerpt from *Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values*
- Thomas Frank, *What’s the Matter with Kansas: How Conservatives won the Heart of America*

Conference Week (February 20–24)

NO CLASS FEBRUARY 23

Week 20 March 2 The Decline of Detroit

From the Course Pack:

- J. Patrick Wright, “The Fourteenth Floor,” from *On a Clear Day You Can See General Motors: John Z. DeLorean’s Look Inside the Automotive Giant*
- Charlie LeDuff, “Fire,” from *Detroit: An American Autopsy*

Online:

- Michael Moore, “Let’s All Hop in a Ryder Truck” (<http://dogeatdog.michaelmoore.com/letsal.html>)
- Ben Hamper, Excerpt 1 from *Rivthead: Tales from the Assembly Line* (<http://hamper.michaelmoore.com/excerpt1.html>)

Week 21 March 9 Los Angeles, 1991–2001

From the Course Pack:

- Helen Zia, “Lost and Found in L.A.,” from *Asian-American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People*

Additional readings:

- Anna Deveare Smith, excerpts from *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* (to be distributed in class)

Week 22 March 16 El Barrio, 1990s

From the Course Pack:

- Jorge Ramos, excerpts from *The Other Face of America*
- Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., excerpts from *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*
- Danny Romero, “A Chicano in Philadelphia”
- Leslie Marmon Silko, “The Border Patrol State”

Online:

- Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus” (<http://www.libertystatepark.com/emma.htm>)
- Abelardo Delgado, “Stupid America” (<http://www.xispas.com/poetry/delgado.htm>)

Week 23 March 23 New York City, September 11, 2001: Terrorism in America

☞ Essays due!

From the Course Pack:

- Jon Powers, “From September 11 to 9/11: Birth of a Legend,” from *Sore Winners (And the Rest of Us) in George Bush’s America*

Additional readings:

- Allen Ginsberg, “Who Runs America?” (<http://heart-to-heart.hobby.ru/ginsberg.htm>)
- Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “The History of the Airplane” (<http://voiceseducation.org/content/lawrence-ferlinghetti-history-airplane>)

Week 24: March 30 Hollywood, 2017: Celebrity Culture in America

From the Course Pack:

- Neal Gabler, excerpts from *Life: The Movie—How Entertainment Conquered Reality*
- Rodney King, excerpt from *The Riot Within: My Journey from Rebellion to Redemption*

Week 25: April 6 TBD

