

AMST 290

American Studies Theory & Methodology

Spring 2018

Instructor Information

Instructor

Prof. Courtney Baker

Course Information

Description

This course introduces students to key concerns and methods in American Studies by focusing on the significance of place, identity, and rights. While we will focus on the territory known as the United States, our readings and research will trouble the security of that designation. By examining the origins of settler colonialism in the Americas, focusing upon national borders and internal boundaries, and exploring the United States' global reach, we will study and develop different ways of understanding "America" as a product of civic rights that are extended and denied. In discussing race, gender, and sexuality, we will discuss how marginalized and "illicit" identities have been conscripted into and radically exposed exclusionary ideas of what it means to be American. Our study of captivity and confinement, be it a consequence of enslavement or imprisonment, will further expose just what is at stake in achieving the freedoms encapsulated in the notion of the American Dream.

Learning Objectives

- Practice and refine college-level academic writing skills
- Cultivate and improve research skills
- Think critically about the American nation state and the United States' relationship to the rest of the world
- Learn multiple approaches to investigating American history and cultural phenomena
- Consider important identitarian configurations including race, ethnicity, gender, class as they play out in the American context

Required Texts

Burgett, *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* (Keywords)

George Lipsitz, *American Studies in a Moment of Danger*

[*States of Emergency: The Object of American Studies*, eds. Russ Castranova and Susan Gillman](#)

The Futures of American Studies, eds. Donald E. Pease and Robyn Weigman

Readings marked on the syllabus with an asterisk (*) are available on our Moodle page. Hard copies of the books are available for purchase at the bookstore and will be on reserve at the library.

You must bring the readings to class for discussion!

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
30 Aug.	Introduction	Syllabus Review (in class)
Disciplinary Un/Making & the Objects of Study		
4 Sept.		Henry Nash Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" (1957) * Castronovo & Gillman, "Introduction: The Study of the American Problems" in <i>States of Emergency</i> Keywords: Literature, Nation, America
6 Sept.		Gene Wise, "'Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement" (1979) * Pease and Wiegman, "Futures" in <i>The Future of American Studies</i> Keywords: Public, Domestic, Modern
11 Sept.		Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. "A New Context for American Studies?" (1989) * Radway, "What's in a Name?" in <i>The Future of American Studies</i> Keywords: Modern, Border, Subject
13 Sept.		Aravamudan, "Rogue States and Emergent Disciplines" in <i>States of Emergency</i> Lowe, "The International within the National" in <i>The Future of American Studies</i> Keywords: America, Space, Empire, Globalization
14 Sept.	*** Blog Post Due by 5pm ***	
18 Sept.		Muñoz, "The Future of the Present" in <i>The Future of American Studies</i> Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity" in <i>The Future of American Studies</i> Keywords: Queer, Gender, Performance, Domestic
20 Sept.		Fluck, "The Humanities in the Age of Expressive Individualism" in <i>The Future of American Studies</i> Lipsitz, Chapter 1: "In the Midnight Hour" in <i>American Studies in a Moment of Danger</i> Keywords: Democracy, Liberalism, Neoliberalism

Whiteness Studies & Black Studies

- 25 Sept. Michaels, "Autobiographies of the Ex-White Men" in *The Future of American Studies*
Wiegman, "Whiteness Studies and the Paradox of Particularity" in *The Future of American Studies*
Keywords: Race, Ethnicity, Racialization
- 27 Sept. Barrett, "Identities and Identity Studies" in *The Futures of American Studies*
Lipsitz, "As Unmarked as Their Place in History" in *American Studies in a State of Danger*
Keywords: Subject, Citizenship, Black
- 28 Sept. *** [Keyword Essay Draft Due](#) ***

Class & the Masses/Gender & Women's Studies

- 3 Oct. [Class & the Masses](#)
Denning, "Work and Culture in American Studies" in *The Futures of American Studies*
Enstad, "Toxicity and the Consuming Subject" in *States of Emergency*
Keywords: Culture, Class, Labor
- 4 Oct. [Gender & Women's Studies](#)
[Radway, "Writing Reading the Romance"](#) *
Keywords: Affect, Gender

Native Sovereignty & Settler Colonialism

- 9 Oct. *Fall Break - No Class Meeting*
- 11 Oct. [Babb, "Crafting Whiteness in Early America"](#) *
[Byszewski, "Colonizing Chaco Canyon"](#) *
[Goldstein, "Toward a Genealogy of the U.S. Colonial Present"](#) *
Keywords: Colonial, Time
- 12 Oct. *** [Revised Essay due](#) ***
- 16 Oct. [Wynter, "1492 - A New World View"](#) *
[Simpson, "Consent's Revenge"](#) *
Keywords: Indian, Government
- 18 Oct. *No Class Meeting*

Disability/Crip Studies

- 23 Oct. [Disability/Crip Studies](#)
[Davis, "The Rule of Normalcy"](#) *
Keywords: Disability, Normal
- 25 Oct. *No Class Meeting*
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Asian-American Studies & Latinx/Chicanx Studies

30 Oct. Asian Am Studies
Fukumura and Matsuoka, "Redefining Security" *
Keywords: Asian, Orientalism

1 Nov. Latinx/Chicanx Studies
Saldívar, "Nuestra América's Borders" *
Keywords: Latino, Diaspora

Archives & Objects: Research Methods in American Studies

6 Nov. Historical/Archival Studies
Lazo, "Migrant Archives" in *States of Emergency*
Lipsitz, "Not Just Another Social Movement" in *American Studies in a Moment of Danger*

8 Nov. Special Collections visit

13 Nov. Cultural Studies
Desmond, "Embodying Difference in Dance" *

15 Nov. *No Class Meeting/Study Day*

20 Nov. *No Class Meeting/Study Day*

22 Nov. *Thanksgiving Break - No Class*

27 Nov. Literary Analysis
Holte, "Representative Voice" *

29 Nov. Case Study Presentations

4 Dec. Case Study Presentations

11 Dec. *** Final Project Due ***
