AMERICAN STUDIES COURSES

AMST 2011.80 (formerly 102.80) – Modern American Cultural History
Kip Kosek
TR, 11:10–12:00
This course offers a foundational survey for students in American Studies and other students interested in the creation of modern American culture. We will define culture broadly to consider social customs and beliefs as well as more specific forms of literary and artistic expression. Central themes of the course include: the rise of consumer culture; the role of mass media in shaping a national culture; the impact of cultural values on the physical landscape; changes in racial formations and ethnic affiliations; cultural constructions of gender and sexuality; and the political meanings of cultural conflict. We will also explore transnational influences on American culture and the effects of American culture abroad. The course draws on many different kinds of primary sources, including memoirs, short stories, films, political speeches, music, photographs, and television shows. In addition, we will read competing interpretations of culture from a variety of scholars and begin to produce our own cultural histories. Students must also register for a discussion section to satisfy the course requirement.

AMST 2320.80 (formerly 181.80) – U.S. Media & Cultural History
Melani McAlister
TR, 12:45–1:35
This course will examine mass culture – film, radio, television, internet – and its role in US history from the turn of the 20th century to the present. Focusing on media production, consumption, and reception, this course will consider the historical contexts in which media emerged and developed. The cultural texts we will study range from silent films to 50s sitcoms and 90s new media. Students will learn to consider media histories in light of theoretical debates about ideology, media effects, national identity, ethnic and racial identity, gender roles, and imperialism. In addition to other course requirements, student work includes a research paper in which students analyze a media artifact in its historical and cultural context. Students must also register for a discussion section to satisfy the course requirement.

AMST 2410.80 (formerly 125.80) – 20th-Century U.S. Immigration
Thomas Guglielmo
MW, 9:35–10:25
This is a course about immigrants, immigration, and immigration policy in the twentieth-century United States. It’s about who came to the United States, when, and why. It’s about the federal government’s various policy approaches to immigration from one group to another and from one time period to another. And it’s about immigrants themselves—where they have come from, why they have left their homelands, and what their migration and settlement experiences have been like. Students must also register for a discussion section to satisfy the course requirement.

AMST 2440.80 (formerly 170.80) – The American City
Suleiman Osman
TR, 9:35–10:25
What is the “American city”? Los Angeles, Detroit, Miami, Phoenix or New York? This is the central question of the exciting field of urban studies. Yet contemporary American cities are incredibly diverse
making them both difficult and exhilarating to study. This interdisciplinary urban studies course will explore the political, architectural and demographic evolution of a variety of American cities after World War II. Students will be also introduced to debates about urban planning and policy. The course will draw often from examples from the Washington DC metro area. Some of the urban landscapes examined will be the “ghetto,” the Las Vegas Strip, Chinatown, the suburbs, waterfront stadiums, Tysons Corner and other "edge cities," public housing, and gentrified downtown neighborhoods. The course will include works by Jane Jacobs, Mike Davis, Spike Lee, Malcolm X and clips from the TV show “The Wire.”

AMST 2490.10 (formerly 167.10) – Weather in American History and Culture
Brent Olson
MW, 3:45-5:00
We measure and predict the weather. It is an object of our scientific expertise and technological developments. We make small talk about the weather. It is a basic context of our shared lives in regions, cities, and neighborhoods. But weather is far more than an object of scientific inquiry or mere background to our day-to-day lives. It intersects with human history, culture, politics, and social debates. Through an exploration of weather-related natural disasters, media representations, and weather modification in America, in this course we will ask: What stories do we tell about weather? How do politics, economy, technology, and social debates shape our understanding of, and response to, weather events? In answering these questions, our understandings of weather will emerge through theoretical debates surrounding the political economy of nature, risks and hazards, and nature’s place in the production of history.

AMST 2490.80 (formerly 167.80) – Jewish Lives in 19th & 20th Century America
Jenna Weissman Joselit
TR, 11:10–12:25
This course explores the personal dimensions of the modern American Jewish experience. Drawing on autobiography, memoir, novels and film as well as on newspapers and other primary sources, it focuses on the stunning variety of ways in which American Jews have chosen to define themselves -then, as now. How did earlier generations of American Jews reflect and act on their identity as Jews? As Americans? Through close consideration of these and other questions, this course offers an intimate portrait of a complex, lively, and always-changing community.

AMST 2490.82 (formerly 167.82) – Varieties of Feminist Theory
Jennifer Nash
MW, 2:20–3:35
It is now commonplace to talk about feminism in the plural. But what does this move towards talking about feminisms – or feminist theories – actually mean? This course is an exploration of the varieties of ways that feminists engage in theory-making, and the strategies they use to connect their theories to a pursuit of social justice. Over the course of the semester, we will become familiar with a host of feminist projects including: dominance feminism, critical race feminism, third wave feminism, black feminism, feminist legal theory, and post colonial feminism. As we read a wide array of feminist texts, we will ask how feminism maintains its cohesiveness in the face of so much divergent theory-making, and how feminism can continue to organize – and theorize – across difference.

AMST 2490.83 (formerly 167.83) – Jews in American Popular Culture
Lauren Strauss
TR, 9:35–10:50
The partnership between Jews and American culture in the 20th and early 21st centuries has been a fruitful one, and bears significance both for the study of Jews in an open society and minority groups in American culture. In this course, we address questions of identity and social change, as well as the influence of politics, in such institutions as Tin Pan Alley and Vaudeville, the American film industry, comics, dance, television, the Broadway musical, popular music, and comedy. We also go beyond religious or ethnic identification, and consider gender and sexual identity as important factors affecting

AMST 2490W.80 (formerly 167W.80) – Freedom in US Thought & Popular Culture
Elisabeth Anker
MW, 2:20–3:10
America was founded on the premise of providing freedom to its people. But what, exactly, is “freedom”? Is it doing what you want or is it participation in politics? Is it about escaping domination or does it require sharing power? These questions have been debated in America since its founding. The course will examine varied answers to these questions provided by American thought and popular culture. We will intertwine the study of theoretical texts with cultural analysis to examine authors from Jefferson to Thoreau, speeches from Martin Luther King to George W. Bush, films from *High Noon* to *Minority Report*, and the video art of Jeremy Blake. Together, we will explore how concepts of freedom and anxieties over freedom’s possibility take cultural form. While we may not settle the question of what freedom is or how to produce it, we will learn both to appreciate its complexity and to critically engage its operations in American public life. *This course satisfies a WID requirement. Students must also register for a discussion section to satisfy the course requirements.*

AMST 2530.80 (formerly 145.80) – Folk Arts in America
John Vlach
M, 2:20–3:35 & W, 3:45–5:00
This course will present an overview of folk art traditions within the United States. Examples will include works produced by a variety of ethnic and regional groups including Native Americans, African Americans, and Euro-Americans. Examples of blacksmithing, pottery, quilting, woodcarving, ceramics, and other genres will be surveyed. Lectures will be organized by artistic media. Several examples within each medium will be discussed to illustrate significant aspects of historical development, cultural variation, technical expertise, and/or creative innovation. Lectures will all be illustrated with slides (some films may be shown) and we may also have some visiting specialists give presentations.

AMST 3353.80 (formerly 140.80) – Women in the United States
Cynthia Harrison (Women’s Studies Dept.)
TR, 3:45–5:00
This course will examine the experience of women in their social, economic, and political roles to understand how gender shapes experience. The exploration will include the impact of class, region, race, and ethnicity on women and on gender roles and the effect of the changes in women's roles on men.

AMST 3361.80 (formerly 174.80) – African American History Since 1865
Erin Chapman
MW, 12:45–2:00
This course will investigate the major events and themes of African American history since the slaves achieved emancipation and began the long struggle toward full freedom in the United States. We will thus study late 19th century and 20th century U.S. history from the perspectives of African American men and women, focusing on the themes of gender, culture, class, racial identity, intra-racial conflicts and solidarity, and the evolving ideologies of the movement for racial advancement. We will cover the major eras of African American politics and cultural production, including education, religion, anti-lynching, the Great Migration, Garveyism, the New Negro Renaissance, the long history of Civil Rights, the Black Arts Movement, Black Power, and Black Feminism.
AMST 3811.80 (formerly 194.80) – Historical Archaeology
Pamela Cressey
T, 3:30–6:00
The course examines both the process and findings of historical archaeology, the study of the modern world from the 15th century using the material remains of the past. The steps of the investigative process are explored using case study and contemporary analogy approaches. Topically, historical archaeology deals with land and underwater sites and deals with early European settlement and its effects on Native American people, the expansion of the frontier, urbanization and industrialization. Special emphasis is placed on African American studies in historical archaeology; a class project provides the opportunity for historical research with public archaeology applications. Archaeological ethics, preservation, curation issues and interaction with the public are also discussed.

AMST 3900W.10 (formerly 168W.10) – Cultural Criticism in America
Kip Kosek
TR, 2:20–3:35
This seminar introduces students to major methods for understanding and interpreting cultural materials. We will explore how and why culture—particularly mass culture such as film, television, photography, music, fashion, and advertising—plays such a significant role in our lives. At various point in the semester, we will examine: 1) the ways that we experience culture and ground our identities in it; 2) the ideological messages and stereotypes that circulate in cultural products; 3) the institutional, corporate, and individual production of cultural products and spaces; and 4) the ways that different audiences interpret the culture they consume. This course is writing-intensive and discussion-oriented. This course satisfies a WID requirement. Restricted to AMST majors only.

AMST 3950W.10 (formerly 198W.10) – The Long Civil Rights Movement
Laurie Lahey
T, 3:30–6:00
This seminar focuses on race and ethnicity in the United States during the Long Civil Rights Movement. We will use primary source documents and secondary literature to complicate the traditional perception of the Civil Rights Movement as a 1954-68 southern phenomenon. We will consider political activism in the 1930s, and movements for social justice in the urban North, the Midwest, and California in the 1960s and 1970s. We will also examine the relationship between the Black Power and Civil Rights movements. Students will contribute to civil rights movement scholarship by producing original research on the movement in Washington, DC. This course satisfies a WID requirement.

AMST 3950W.11 (formerly 198W.11) – Black Consumer Culture & Politics
Sandra Heard
W, 3:30–6:00
This seminar will explore mass culture’s role in shaping African-American identity and political movements in the twentieth century. Students will examine how blacks used automobiles, clothing, housing, music, and other consumable goods to exhibit status and combat racial discrimination. The liberating and restrictive aspects of mass and conspicuous consumption will also be recurring themes of investigation. By the end of the course, students will complete an original research project that focuses on the intersection of commodity culture, black identity formation, and grassroots organizing in an urban or suburban context. This course satisfies a WID requirement.
GRADUATE COURSES

Note: Check the GW Schedule of Classes website for class locations and the most up-to-date information at http://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/

AMST 6190.10 (formerly 289.81) – Debating Democracy in America
Elisabeth Anker
W, 10:30–12:30
This course will examine key debates on the practice and possibility of democracy in America, using the work of contemporary cultural and political theory and media texts. We'll examine work on citizenship, political affect, the war on terror, liberalism and neoliberalism, empire, multiculturalism, agency and posthumanism, feminism, queer politics and the "post-racial" era. Texts will include Giorgio Agamben, States of Exception; Jane Bennett, Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things; Lauren Berlant, The Queen of America Goes to Washington City; Judith Butler, Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence; David Eng, Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy; Paul Gilroy, After Empire: Multiculture or Postcolonial Melancholia; Timothy Melley, Empire of Conspiracy: The Culture of Paranoia in Postwar America; Aihwa Ong, Neoliberal Citizenship; Jasbir Puar, Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times; George Shulman, American Prophecy: Race and Redemption in American Political Culture; Linda Zerilli, Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom. Films to include: Babel; Borat: Cultural Learnings of America to Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan; Forrest Gump; Happy Together; Syriana; Thelma and Louise.

AMST 6190.11 (formerly 289.11) – Religion and Media
Melani McAlister
R, 3:30–6:00
Traditionally, the study of religion and media has often focused on how media and popular culture have portrayed religion: God (or faith) as seen in the movies. This course will consider this question, but will primarily examine how media of various sorts have been resources for religious communities. We will examine mediated forms of religious practice, from Protestant evangelicals’ use of radio in the 1930s to Oprah’s spirituality to the development of transnational Muslim communities on the internet. We will also examine how news media have reported on religion, in part to understand the sometimes solicitous, sometimes hostile relation between secular and sacred in the United States. Working from a capacious sense of what constitutes religion, and of the sites and sources of media, the course will focus on both historical and contemporary case studies, and will include significant theoretical reading on religion and media.

AMST 6190.12 (formerly 289.10) – Preservation as Public Policy
Pat Tiller
R, 4:10–6:00
This class builds professional skills in heritage public policy criticism. Through readings, written analyses, and discussions, students develop critical assessment skills by analyzing selected past, current and evolving U.S. heritage laws, regulations, and administrative procedures at the local, state, tribal, and national levels. Oftentimes this is accomplished through comparative analyses with international counterparts. Understanding better the key attributes that make for effective heritage public policy and applying these critically through comparative analysis of existing heritage policy practices provides important professional skills. The class explores such important questions as: what are the policy goals; how do you measure success; what is the cost; what is the public benefit; who are the constituents; what are their interests; what public support is there; and, what opposition exists and why? Of paramount importance is the idea that every heritage law or public policy has multiple and often conflicting points of special interest, view, and support / opposition. And that the most effective public policy is one that anticipates these, or changes with them, ensuring the optimum public benefit and effectiveness all the while preserving our nation’s heritage patrimony for future generations. Topics to be explored include: is heritage an appropriate interest of the state; cultural biases in current heritage public policies; the
influence of growing cultural diversity on heritage public policies; and, analyses of current heritage policy issues before the Congress and the American people today.

**AMST 6195.10 (formerly 290.10) – Research: Identity and Power**
Chad Heap
F, 2:10–4:00pm
This graduate research seminar takes as its subject the role of identity and power in American culture. We will focus on individual research and writing, as well as on reading and commenting on each other’s work. The goal is for each student to produce an original, article-length (25-35 pp.), primary-source-based research essay that can ultimately be submitted to a scholarly journal for publication. Class meetings will focus on developing a research question, identifying primary sources, situating one’s research within existing scholarship, formulating arguments, using evidence, and drafting and revising a clearly written, final essay. Each class member should be prepared to discuss potential research topics at our first seminar meeting.

**AMST 6470.80 (formerly 281.80) – Cityscapes**
Suleiman Osman
T, 2:10–4:00
What is the “city”? How have writers, reformers, theorists, and planners attempted to represent the “American city”? Does the city embody the promise or threat of modernity? Should Americans try to plan cities or allow them to organically flourish? Is the city an integrated regional system or a diverse mosaic of local places? We will read social and cultural histories of American cities, as well as theoretical works by writers and scholars such as Walter Benjamin, Jane Jacobs, the Chicago School, LeCorbusier, W.E.B. Du Bois, Mike Davis, Dolores Hayden, and David Harvey.

**AMST 6480.80 (formerly 270.80) – Theory and Practice of Public History**
Marya McQuirter
T, 4:10–6:00
This graduate seminar in Public History will explore the theoretical and practical work of historians within and outside of the academy engaged in educating the public in the places where the majority of people learn history: museums, historic sites, heritage trails, theme parks, television and radio programs, websites, wikis and podcasts. It will be attentive to the challenges in representing “difficult” subjects like slavery, the Civil War and the atomic bomb, as well as the challenges to professional historians as the primary producers of history. Among the topics we will consider will be the ways the general public learns about and conceptualizes history, the use of history in urban revitalization efforts, the coupling of sustainability and history and the popularity and impact of new media and technology on history. Students will become familiar with the theoretical and practical dimensions of public history and will have the opportunity to meet and learn from practicing public historians in the DC area. Class requirements will include class presentations, exhibition reviews and a research project.

**AMST 6562.80 (formerly 256.10) – Folklore Theory**
John Vlach
W, 6:10–8:00
This course presents a survey of the intellectual history of the development of the academic field of folklore and folklife study in the United States. We will trace the rise of various theories of culture, modes of analysis, and tactics of interpretation starting in the second half of the nineteenth century and concluding with contemporary times. The class will be conducted in a semi-seminar fashion. The instructor will lecture for the first half of each class meeting with discussion being lead by a designated student or students for the second half. Student discussions will focus on the biographical profiles of key figures whose careers are emblematic of particular interpretive techniques or positions. These individuals include many of the outstanding leaders in the fields of literature, social science, and museum work. In addition to participation in class discussions, student will be expected to write a seminar paper (20-25
pages) on some aspect of American folklore theory. The specific topic will be selected in consultation with the instructor.

**AMST 6730.10 (formerly 284.10) – American Photography: Theory & Practice**

Frank Goodyear  
M, 6:10–8:00  
Over the course of the last 170 years, photography has emerged as the dominant visual medium in American society. Photographic images have played a central role in mediating our understanding of the different social, political, and cultural landscapes in America. This graduate seminar will consider the many ways in which photography has been practiced by individuals, theorized by visual culture scholars, and incorporated into American life. We will look especially at the unique nature of the medium and interrogate the different traditions and usages that have grown up around it. Readings will comprise a selection of recent books on the theory and practice of photography in America. Students will be required to complete two writing assignments. The first assignment is a five-page critical review of the book you chose to report on. This essay will be due one week after your in-class report. It is expected that this essay will be more than a summary of the book’s contents, but will be rather a paper that interrogates its methods and conclusions. Each student will also research and write a 15 to 20 page essay on an original topic in this field. During the final three weeks of the semester, students will have an opportunity to present their research to the class.
OTHER COURSES OF INTEREST

AH 6254.10 – American Art Seminar
David Bjelajac
T, 3:30–6:00

ENG 6351.10 – Nineteenth Century
Christopher Sten
M, 6:10–8:40

ENG 6520.10 – Ethnicity and Identity
Patricia Pei-Chang Chu
W, 3:30–6:00

GEOG 6208.10 – Land Use & Urban Transportation
L. Marcus
R, 6:10–8:00

GEOG 6293.10 – Migration and Development
Marie Price
M, 5:10–7:00

HIST 6001.10 – 2nd Amendment: Uses History & Law
Robert James Cottrol
T, 3:50–5:50

HIST 6001.15 – American Indians to 1890
David Silverman
R, 5:10–7:00

HIST 6321.10 – Reading and Research Seminar: Recent U.S. History
Leo Ribuffo
T, 6:10–8:00

HIST 6360.10 – Seminar: Immigration/Ethnicity in the U.S.
Tyler Anbinder
W, 5:10–7:00

HIST 6370.10 – U.S. Legal History
Robert James Cottrol
R, 3:50–5:50

MSTD 6601.13 – Museums and Race
Laura Schiavo
T, 11:10–1:00

MSTD 6710.10 – Museums and Technology
C. Kotcho; D. Greil
W, 6:10–8:00
This course takes as a point of departure the fact that feminism is a vibrant site of theory-making. Over the course of the semester, we will delve into contemporary debates in feminist theory, with particular attention to feminist theory's at-times contested relationship with other theoretical traditions (including queer theory, postcolonial theory, and critical race theory). As we study recent innovations in feminist theory, we will also explore how these new debates have roots in earlier feminist debates. The course will give particular attention to feminist scholarship on neoliberalism, globalization, intersectionality and post-intersectionality, pleasure, agency, and commodification.