This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the interdisciplinary field of American Studies. We will spend some time on the history and development of American Studies, and most of our time reading good books written by American Studies scholars. By the end of this course, students will be able to name and describe the major influences and themes in American Studies scholarship since 1950. They will learn to read books from diverse disciplinary perspectives and connect them in original and innovative ways. Finally, they will identify ways in which their own research interests might intervene into American Studies scholarship.

**Final course grades will be determined as follows:**

**Weekly participation in seminar (20%)**
Did you attend? Had you done the reading effectively? Were you prepared to ask questions and interact with the readings and your peers in a respectful and critical manner? Did you ask questions or make comments that drew common threads or useful comparisons across different readings (from this or any week of the course)? Did you participate meaningfully each week, or only when we read something you were interested in? Did you share your thoughts, positive or negative, or did you save “what you really think” for discussions outside of class? If you must miss a seminar meeting due to illness or a family emergency, please inform me in writing and provide any available documentation.

**Discussion leadership in seminar (5%)**
Once during the semester you will begin our discussion of the week’s readings with a short presentation (5-10 minutes) to the whole seminar that outlines: 1) main arguments 2) methodologies 3) sources 4) reviews of author(s)’s work and its implications for the field and 5) discussion questions. Hit each of these effectively, and you’ll earn all 5 points.
We will read ten monographs in this course, plus 3 articles by Kaplan that you might treat as a book. You must write a 500-800 word review of six of them. Send each to lshire@uwo.ca before class on the date we discuss the book. A good book review pinpoints and pithily summarizes the thesis, methods, and sources of the study; identifies the most important implications of the research findings and places them in conversation with others who agree and disagree in the field; points out any substantive omissions or problems; indicates what new questions the study has raised for future research. If you are unsure what a good book review looks like, browse the review section of your favorite academic history journal. These cannot be accepted after the seminar meets on that book (whether or not you attend), so please plan accordingly.

Choose a reasonably delimited question and conduct original research into primary and secondary sources to answer it. You might choose a particular cultural artifact/event or primary source to analyze, or carve out a small piece of a larger research project to explore in this essay. You should use as many of our shared course materials as are relevant to your research question, in addition to those you find in your research. Your final draft is due on December 22, 2017 by 12 noon. It must include a title, footnotes or endnotes, and a bibliography in Chicago/Turabian. If possible and appropriate, you are encouraged to use this assignment to begin research for a conference paper, journal article, MA MRP, or dissertation chapter. A one page proposal of a topic for this paper is due 3 November 2017.

Week 1: A Short History of a Big Field
Because we will only meet 11 times this semester, please read these before we meet the first time on 8 September. You should be able to find all of them online, some via Western Libraries:

- Assignment: skim the Tables of Contents in the First volume of AQ, most recent volume of AQ, and one in the middle somewhere... what do you notice? What did you want to read?
**Weeks 2-4: American Literature and Cultural History**

Discussion leader:

Week 3. 22 Sept: Julie P. Elman, *Chronic Youth: Disability, Sexuality, and US Media Cultures of Rehabilitation* (NYU Press, 2014)
Discussion leader:

Discussion leader:

**Recommended further reading for those interested in literary American Studies:**

**Weeks 5-7: U.S. History and American Studies**

Discussion leader:

Watch: “The Sheik” (1921)
Discussion leader:

Watch: “Loving” (2016)
Discussion leader:

**Recommended further reading for those interested in historical American Studies:**

**Weeks 8-12: Citizenship, Technology, Affect: Studying Culture Now (and Then)**

Week 8. 3 November: Schulte, Cached: Decoding the Internet in Global Popular Culture (NYU Press, 2013)
Watch: “WarGames” (1983)
Discussion leader:

Watch: “Ghost” (1990)
Discussion leader:

Week 10. 17 November:
Watch: Sleep Dealer (2008)
Discussion leader:

Read: Super Indian [http://superindiancomics.com](http://superindiancomics.com)
Discussion leader:

Week 12. 1 December: no class meeting. Get started on your final essay.

**Week 13: Conclusions**

Watch: clips from “Birth of a Nation” and “Gone with the Wind” – see assignment next page
Assignment: pick an American Studies Dept. in the US that trains Ph.D. students and look at who is among the faculty. How and where were they trained? What do they write about?

Discussion leader:

**Support Services**

Graduate school can be challenging to your mental and physical health. I encourage you to plan ways to care for yourself throughout the coming year. Here is a list of resources in London that might help you do that, compiled by Emily Field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At^lohsa Native Family Healing Services</td>
<td>519-432-2270</td>
<td>343 Richmond St, Suite 109</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alphabet Community Centre (LGBTQ Support)</td>
<td>519-765-5000</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@acclondon.ca">info@acclondon.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Cultural Learner Center</td>
<td>519-432-1133</td>
<td>505 Dundas St</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line</td>
<td>1-800-268-9688</td>
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<tr>
<td>London and Area Food Bank</td>
<td>519-659-4045</td>
<td>926 Leathorne St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Cross Cultural Learner Centre</td>
<td>519-432-1133</td>
<td>505 Dundas St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Sister’s Place</td>
<td>1-877-859-0352 519-679-9570</td>
<td>566 Dundas Street, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N’Amerind (London) Friendship Centre (services for First Nations and Aboriginal clients)</td>
<td>519-672-0131</td>
<td>260 Colbourne St</td>
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<tr>
<td>On campus mental health services</td>
<td>519-661-3031</td>
<td>WSS Room 4100  519-661-3771</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Development Centre</td>
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<td>Student Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFLAG</td>
<td>Lori Ward 519-686-7691</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joanne King 519-319-6934</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy Options: London Health Sciences Centre</td>
<td>519-685-8204</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
*committed to women’s right to choose to parent or terminate |
| Pride Western                    | 519-661-DIAL      | 38 UCC, UWO                     |             |
| Regional HIV/AIDS Connection     | 519-434-1601      | 186 King St                     |             |
| Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre (has culturally appropriate counselling for First Nations and Aboriginal clients) | 519-646-6100 | 268 Grosvenor Street |             |
| Sexual Assault Center London     | 24hr Crisis line 519-438-2272 | 255 Horton Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 5 |             |
|                                  | 519-439-0844      |                                 |             |
| Women’s Community House          | 519-642-3000      | 101 Wellington Road             |             |
| Wotch Community Mental Health Services | 519-668-0624 | 534 Queens Ave             |             |
| Additional Services can be found by visiting [www.info.london.on.ca](http://www.info.london.on.ca) | | | |