

American Studies 1020: An Introduction to American Studies

Professors Laurel Shire (Fall) and Robert MacDougall (Winter)

Western University 2017-2018

Tuesdays, 2:30-4:20 SSC 3028

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Pennsylvania Gazette, May 9, 1754



Rick McKee, Augusta Chronicle, August 16, 2017

In this course, students will be introduced to some of the key events, ideas, and concepts in American Studies; the interdisciplinary study of the culture and society of the United States. Moving chronologically from First Contact through the present, each week we will explore the history, culture, and politics of U.S.-American society. We will be especially interested in how categories and identities related to race, gender, class, modernity, technology, citizenship, democracy, and national identity developed in U.S. culture, and how each continues to influence Americans (and their neighbours) in the present.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. define and describe the development and continuing relevance of major categories and problem in American culture, such as whiteness and race, capitalism and class identity, gender and citizenship, civilization, technology, and "progress," and, of course, who

counts as a “real” American and what kinds of rights and privileges that bestows on them.

2. read and assess the value of a scholarly article or book chapter for argument and sources, and not get bogged down in the small details
3. read and analyze historical primary and contemporary media sources, including film, podcasts, poetry, visual art, music, drama, and fiction
4. write short, properly cited and well-researched essays that summarize, analyze, and evaluate past and present cultural materials as objects that American Studies scholars might use to illuminate US-American culture and society

Assignments	Length (words)	Weight %
Participation in lecture and tutorial	---	10
Weldon Library Research Exercise	---	10
Primary Source analysis	750	10
Mid-term examination (December)	---	25
Winter term short essay	1500	20
Final Examination (April)	---	25

Required Readings for the fall semester include selections from the following, available at Weldon Library and/or on OWL:

Jonathan Fetter-Vorm and Ari Kelman, *Battle Lines: A Graphic History of the Civil War* (2015)

Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1791)

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Dover Thrift Edition, 2001, c. 1861)

Deborah Larsen, *The White: a Novel* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2002)

James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (Simon and Schuster, 2007)

Venture Smith, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa: But Resident above Sixty Years in the United States of America. Related by Himself* (New London, CT: Printed by C. Holt, at The Bee-office), 1798

Film and TV:

“Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North,” DVD (Ebb Pod Productions, 2008)

“John Adams” miniseries, HBO, 2008

Podcasts:

Ben Franklin’s World – episode with Prof. Jennifer Morgan

This American Life – “The Trail of Tears”

Course Policies

Participation: If you want to succeed in this course you must complete all reading, viewing, listening, and writing assignments each week, and come to lecture and tutorial prepared to discuss them. Please bring all readings (print and electronic) and assignments with you to class on the due dates – failing to bring them to class will lower your participation grade. In class, be prepared for pop quizzes, free writes, group work, or any other assessment I might feel moved to give you. In-class assessments will be included in your Participation grade. Respect for me, your colleagues, and yourself also means that you will come to class prepared to **take the risk to**

participate openly and frequently in our meetings together. Be brave! Together with you I will work hard to make this class a space in which we can all raise difficult questions and learn from each other. I take attendance only for reference, but obviously if you aren't present, you aren't participating.

Comportment: Feel free to snack in class so long as you are not disrupting lecture or discussion. Since lecture is 1:50 long, there will not be regular breaks, so if you need a bathroom break, quietly get up and go. Since you are an adult, it is up to you how you choose to use class time, but please keep in mind that spending time off-task during class (texting, checking email/facebook, etc) will not result in better marks for you or for the people around you who are also distracted. Some research studies suggest that those kinds of distractions can lower your final course grade (and theirs) up to 20%. If you choose to use class time in that way, please sit in the back or on the perimeter of the room, and do not come to office hours and ask for help or extra credit.

Absences: If you must miss class, please e-mail your TA. Family emergencies, religious holidays, games (for athletes) and illness are excusable absences. It is up to you to provide explanations and supporting documentation, we will not remind you to provide them. Unexplained absences (or excessive tardiness) will hurt your participation grade. If you are ill, **DO NOT COME TO CLASS.** If you get sick, you are still expected to read, write and complete assignments. If you require an extension, you must email me and request one as soon as you get sick.

Assignments: Unless otherwise specified, please turn in all assignments to your TA by the due date and time listed below. Send electronic assignments in MS Word or PDF formats *only*.

In addition to the hard copy, all assignments must be submitted electronically to the Turnitin plagiarism detection service. Detailed instructions for the submission process through the OWL course website will be provided in class. Students are strongly advised not to wait until the last few minutes before midnight to submit the paper. High demand and internet failure are not acceptable reasons for failing to submit on time. In the event of any problems, contact your instructor.

Note: "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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."
[www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/crsout.pdf]

Primary Source Analysis: Once during the semester you will each write a Primary Source Analysis. This is an analytical assignment in which you will use what you have learned to analyze a primary source. Use the "7 questions" to help get your analysis off to a strong start and help you organize your thoughts. **DO NOT**, however, simply turn in answers to those questions –

formulate an argument about the source and the significance of this document. Write a 3-4 page essay (750-800 words, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 pt font) that supports your thesis argument with evidence drawn from course materials and discussions. You are strongly discouraged from using outside sources, as this assignment is designed to measure your ability to analyze sources yourself. If you simply copy someone else's analysis, you will lose points. If you plagiarize someone else's analysis (copy it without giving them credit) you will fail this assignment and the course.

Library research assignment:

You might think of this as a "lab report" that will reflect that you completed each step of the assignment (described in detail on the assignment sheet on OWL) and what you learned along the way. An example of a correctly completed Preliminary Research Report is posted on OWL.

Extra Credit: If you attend one of the Goodman Lectures or any of the American Studies Speakers Series lectures (TBA), we will apply 2 extra points to your overall participation mark. Please sign in at the lecture to be sure that we note your attendance.

Fall Semester Schedule

1. 09/12 Introductions and expectations, how to read in this course

Before tutorial – read:

- the Introduction (the original introduction, not the one for the new edition) and SKIM Chapters 2 and 3 of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*
- Foner, "Twisting History in Texas" from *The Nation*
- Watch Erin Foner interviewed on the Colbert Report

Guiding questions: what are the arguments made in the Intro and Chapters 2 & 3 of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*? What are the many things that Loewen thinks are wrong about how U.S. History is represented in textbooks? How do the Texas School Board's 2010 decisions influence what students throughout the U.S. learn? What might be some of the consequences of this?

2. 09/19: Frontiers as Contact Zones. What is an American? Fashioning the Self from Encounters with the Other.

Before lecture SKIM and listen:

- Perdue, Theda. 1997. "Columbus Meets Pocahontas in the American South." *Southern Cultures* 3 (1): 4-21.
- Read: Benjamin Wadsworth, "A Well-Ordered Family" (1712)
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/bdorse1/41docs/48-wad.html>
- Morgan, Jennifer L. "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997): 167-92.

- Listen to Prof. Morgan's interview on the podcast "Ben Franklin's World"
<https://www.benfranklinworld.com/episode-070-jennifer-l-morgan-how-historians-research/>

Before tutorial read and look at:

- <http://notevenpast.org/casta-paintings/>
- youtube previews of the Disney movie "Pocahontas"
 - how has popular culture changed since the 1700s? What seems to have stayed the same?

3. 09/26 The "American Dream"

Read before lecture and tutorials:

- John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630)
 - <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>
- Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, "What is an American?"
 - http://web.utk.edu/~mfitzge1/docs/374/Creve_brief.pdf
- excerpts from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1791) found on OWL

Reading Guide Questions: How does each of these authors define America and Americans? What are the ideals they are espousing? How does each help to construct the idea of "the American Dream?" How does each illustrate or ignore some of the aspects of the colonial social order we've been thinking about?

4. 10/03 Whose American Dream? Slavery and Its Legacies

Watch/Read before lecture and tutorials:

- "Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North" - available at Weldon library and online
- Ch. 5 of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*
- "A Connecticut Slave" from *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery*, 61-76
- excerpts from Venture Smith, "[A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa: But Resident above Sixty Years in the United States of America. Related by Himself.](#)" New-London, CT: Printed by C Holt, at The Bee-office, 1798. See document on OWL for the excerpts you should read.
- Reading Guide Questions: Name three ways that Venture Smith's life was typical or atypical of the lives of slaves brought to North America in the 18th century. How does his narrative illustrate some of the aspects of the early slave trade or the lives of slaves that you read about? Write down your examples and bring them to lecture and tutorial.

Due in tutorial in 2 weeks: Weldon Library Exercise. Start by finding one example from the US media in the past year of a reference to the "Founding Fathers" or the "founders." What are the "founders" supposed to have done or believed? Then complete the Weldon Library Research

exercise to see what else you can find about the Founder(s)/topic from your media example. Can you tell what was true and what was “spin” (an interpretation, not a fact) about the representation of “the Founders” that you found? Turn in the Research Report in tutorial the week of 10/17.

5. 10/10 THANKSGIVING and Fall Break Week – no classes

6. 10/17 Independence! Revolution or Rebellion? And, Who Will Be a Citizen?

Read/Watch before class:

- Part 2, “Independence,” John Adams (HBO, 2008) on reserve at library
- Chapter 7: “The American Revolution” from *History Lessons* (OWL)
- Chapter 8 of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*
- The Declaration of Independence
- John and Abigail Adams Letters (on OWL)

Due in tutorial: Weldon Library Exercise re: American “Founders”

7. 10/24 The View from Native America

Read:

- Larsen, *The White*
- choose one chapter from Jemison’s original narrative to compare with Larsen’s novel at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6960.bibrec.html>. How is the novel different from the 1823 account? (Use ctrl+F to search for the right spot in the text on-line.)

Reading guide questions: How does the 18th century colonial social order look from Mary Jemison’s perspective? And from that of her Seneca adoptive family? What about the American Revolution? Did it promise her, or them, “liberty” or “freedom?”

8. 10/31 The “Early Republic” – An Empire for Liberty? Or a New Colonial Power?

Read:

- John Adams and John Sullivan letters (OWL)
- “Memorials to Congress” from 1804 and 1815, Constitution of the Squatter’s Union in Lake County, Indiana, 1836 (OWL)

SKIM:

- Horsman, Reginald. "The Dimensions of an "Empire for Liberty": Expansion and Republicanism, 1775-1825." *Journal of the Early Republic* 9, no. 1 (1989): 1-20. doi:10.2307/3123522. Find it via lib.uwo.ca
- Colin G. Calloway, "The End of an Era: British-Indian Relations in the Great Lakes Region after the War of 1812," *Michigan Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Fall, 1986), pp. 1-20

9. 11/07 Jacksonian “Democracy” and Indian Removal: Gender, Race, and Political Speech

Skim Read/Listen:

- Theda Perdue, "The Legacy of Indian Removal." *Journal of Southern History* 78, no. 1 (2012): 3-36.
- Mary Hershberger, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition: The Struggle Against Indian Removal in the 1830s" find it via lib.uwo.ca
- Ch. 4 of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*
- This American Life – "The Trail of Tears" <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/107/trail-of-tears>

Reminder: assignment due in tutorial next week.

10. 11/14 Engines of Prosperity Sowing Seeds of Disunion: the "Market Revolution," Slavery, and Manifest Destiny

Read:

- Chapters 7 and 11 of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*
- Adam Rothman, "Slavery and National Expansion in the United States"
- Thomas Corwin, "Against the Mexican War"
- Guillermo Prieto, "A Solemn Moment. To My Motherland." (1847)

Due in tutorial: 750-800 word analysis of either Corwin or Prieto. How does this primary source illustrate a larger theme from this historical moment? Do not simply summarize it – analyze it. Use the 7 Questions to get started. Craft a thesis argument about the source and use readings from this week (and any other) to support your argument.

11. 11/21 Alternative Views of "Progress:" Reform and Entertainment in Antebellum America

Read:

- Chapter 6 of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*
- Ronald Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860*, Preface and Introduction (xiii-xix, 3-20)
- LeRoy Ashby, "Blackface, Barnum, and Newspaper Ballyhoo," from *With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture since 1830*, 11-40

Primary sources:

- The Drunkard's Progress: <https://springfieldmuseums.org/collections/item/the-drunkards-progress-nathaniel-currier/>
- Barnum's museum: <http://lostmuseum.cuny.edu>
- Minstrel songs: <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/minstrel/misohp.html>

12. 11/28 Race, Gender and the Politics of Slavery

Read:

- Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) (excerpts)
- George Fitzhugh, "The Blessings of Slavery" (1857)

- Frederick Douglass “What, to the slave, is the 4th of July?”

Guiding questions for reading:

What were Linda Brent/Harriet Jacobs’ dilemmas (she had more than one)? What would you have done in her position? Would you have made similar or different choices? How is her narrative written to appeal to an antebellum audience? Who is she trying to persuade? What is she trying to persuade them to think? How does she do this – what kinds of language, emotions or appeals does she make? How is Douglass’ argument similar and different? And what do Fitzhugh’s pro-slavery arguments reveal about this moment in American political and cultural history?

13. 12/05 The Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Lost Cause

Read:

- Jonathan Fetter-Vorm and Ari Kelman, *Battle Lines: A Graphic History of the Civil War*, 2015
- Grace Elizabeth Hale, “The Lost Cause and the Meaning of History” *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2013), pp. 13–17
- Recommended: Chapters 12 and 13 of *Lies My Teacher Told Me*

Primary sources on Charlottesville, 2017:

- Vice News report
<https://news.vice.com/story/vice-news-tonight-full-episode-charlottesville-race-and-terror>
- “Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy” Southern Poverty Law Center
https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/whoseheritage_splc.pdf
- Warren Goldstein, “It’s Time for a Second Appomattox”
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/its-about-time-for-a-second-appomattox_us_59949741e4b056a2b0ef0291

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Prerequisites and Antirequisites:

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you

use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

Medical Issues:

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. This site provides links the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Heidi Van Galen, Administrative Officer, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84963 or yangalen@uwo.ca