

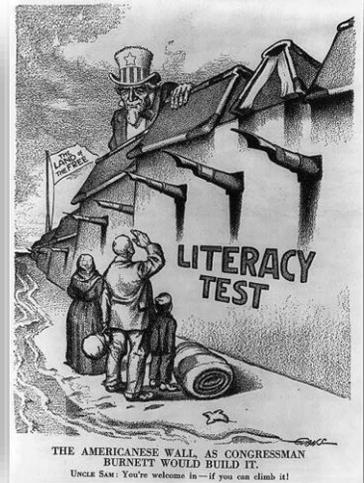


The University of Western Ontario
AMERICAN STUDIES 3310F
Advanced American Studies: Being American

Fall 2019-20
Mondays 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.
John Labatt Visual Arts Centre (VAC) Room 100

Instructor: Professor Aldona Sendzikas

Office Hours (Fall Term): Tuesdays 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. or by appointment
Department of History, Office: Lawson Hall 1222
Email: asendzi2@uwo.ca



Unidentified American soldier, 1917/18; Oakland, CA, 1942, by Dorothea Lange; The Americanese Wall by Raymond O. Evans, 1916. (Credit for images #1-3: U.S. Library of Congress). We the People, by Shepard Fairey; We the Future, by Rommy Torrico; We the Future, by Shepard Fairey. (Images #4-6 used courtesy of amplifier.org.)

Course Description:

What defines being “American”? How is the American identity constructed, and how and why is it frequently contested? This course employs an interdisciplinary approach to explore the meaning(s) and definition(s) of American identity from multiple viewpoints, and within the context of US history, politics, regions, values, and culture.

Prerequisite(s):

1.0 History course at the 2200 level or above or enrolment in an American Studies module.

Unless you have either the requisites for this 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. The 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.

Antirequisite(s):

American Studies 3320F/G.

Course Syllabus:**Course Content and Objectives:**

In this course, we will engage in the “doing” of American Studies by bringing together sources from a variety of disciplines—including History, English, Political Science, Popular Culture, *etc.*—as well as current events, in order to explore and examine a variety of topics, in an attempt to answer the question: What defines being “American”? Who determines this definition? What unites Americans, and what divides them? How is the American identity constructed, how has it evolved, and how and why is it frequently contested? How and why has the definition of “being American” changed? Who has been excluded from “being American,” and why?

Learning Outcomes:

In this course, students will:

- Practice applying an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the United States.
- Use both primary and secondary sources, drawn from a range of disciplines, to interpret and analyze issues in American history and society.
- Learn to situate contemporary issues in the context of historical events, as well as in the broader context of American Studies.
- 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 and research skills.
- Develop improved presentation and communication skills through class discussion.

Course Materials:

- *A New Literary History of America*, edited by Greil Marcus and Werner Sollors (Cambridge, MA and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). **This book will be available for purchase at the Western Bookstore.** (One copy will also be on reserve at Weldon Library, for a 2-hour loan period.)
- Additional weekly online readings, which will be posted on the OWL course website or otherwise accessible online. These readings will, for the most part, be primary documents intended to supplement and provide background information regarding the 2-3 short essays assigned from the textbook each week.

Methods of Evaluation:

Grading:

- Class participation 20%
- Two short written assignments* (3-5 pp. each) 10% x 2 = 20%
- Leading class discussion on one of the assigned readings 10%
- Midterm exam (in class) (Oct. 28th, 2019) 25%
- Research essay (10-12 pages) (due Dec. 2nd, 2019) 25%

*The first written assignment will be due on October 7th, 2019. The second written assignment will be due on the date that you choose to lead a class discussion on an assigned reading from the textbook. This written assignment will be on the topic of that particular reading.

Written assignments

Written assignments must be submitted in paper form to the instructor at the start of class on the due date, and in electronic form via the submission link on the OWL course website by the same time. (By using the submission link on the course website, your paper will automatically be submitted to Turnitin.com.)

Further instructions regarding the above assignments will be provided in class.

Late assignments: A late penalty of 5% for the first day, and 2% for each day after the first day (including Saturdays and Sundays) will be incurred for all written work submitted after the due date and time. Papers submitted on the due date but after the due time (*i.e.*, 2:30 p.m.) will be considered late and will be penalized 2%. Late papers should be submitted at the History Department (Lawson Hall 2201) drop box, as well as electronically via the course website. Keep a copy of each of your written assignments until you receive the grade for it.

Please note that AS3310G is an essay course. According to Western'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." In this class, that means that all of the written assignments (including the midterm exam) must be completed and submitted in order for a student to pass the course.

Expectations:

- Regular attendance.
- Completion of all assigned readings and active, informed participation in class discussion, based on those readings.
- Courtesy and respect towards other members of the class.
- Be present: turn off cell phones and other electronic devices, and engage with the class. Laptops are allowed if they are used to take notes or to refer to online course readings. Use of laptops for other purposes in class may negatively affect your participation mark, and you may be asked to turn them off if they are distracting you or other members of the class.

Participation:

Each week, beginning on September 16th, two students will be tasked with evaluating the participation of their classmates. Instructions and evaluation forms will be provided in class. Your participation grade for the course will be a combination of the results of these peer evaluations and the instructor's evaluation of your contributions to class discussion.

Policy on Absences and Extensions:

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 University of Western Ontario Student Medical Certificate. This form can be accessed at the Social Science Academic Counselling website: <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/>, or can be picked up at the Academic Counselling Office in the student's home faculty. Further details regarding this policy can be found at the same website.

Pressures of work, time management issues, or computer/printer difficulties do not constitute acceptable reasons for an extension. Plan ahead!

Students should familiarize themselves with the university's Policy on Accommodation for Illness. Please visit https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html to view all updated academic policies regarding medical accommodations.

Course Schedule:***Week 1 (September 9th): Introduction.***

Review of syllabus. Introduction to course topic, themes, and methodology. Discussion: what defines being an American? Where should we look to find this definition? Is the meaning of "being American" different today than it has been in the past?

Week 2 (September 16th): "What, then, is the American, this new man...?"

How has American identity been defined historically? Is this a static definition, or does it change? What unites Americans? What divides them? How do America's origins, the American Revolution, and America's founding documents contribute to American identity?

*Peer evaluation of participation begins.

Week 3 (September 23rd): “A Model of Christianity.”

Religion, religious differences, and religious tolerance in America. Is religion part of “being American,” or is “separation of church and state” an essential element of the American identity?

Week 4 (September 30th): “Warrior Nation.”

America is a nation that was born through warfare, that was split apart by warfare, and that traditionally has respected military service. How has war shaped the meaning of America? To what extent is war and military service part of “being American”?

Week 5 (October 7th): “The complexities of race in this country that we’ve never really worked through...”

What is it like to be black in America? To what extent have slavery and racism shaped the meaning of America? We will discuss the idea of “double consciousness”: the reconciling of black identity and American identity in a race conscious society.

*Short paper #1 due.

October 14th: Happy Thanksgiving! No class today.

Week 6 (October 21st): “You are on Indian land.”

The original Americans: how do they fit into, and how have they shaped, the definition of “being American”?

Week 7 (October 28th): MIDTERM EXAM (to be written in class.)

FALL READING WEEK: November 4th – 8th. No class this week.

Week 8 (November 11th): “Give me your tired, your poor...” vs. “I will build a great wall...”

New Americans: the place of immigrants in America and in American identity. How are Mexican-Americans and other recent immigrants reframing and reshaping the meaning of “being American”? Why has this been such a cause for concern among some other Americans?

Week 9 (November 18th): “Un-American.”

When and why have certain Americans been deemed “un-American”? How does this help define—and complicate--the meaning of “being American”?

Week 10 (November 25th): “Why is it that, as a culture, we are more comfortable seeing two men holding guns than holding hands?”

Being gay in America: creating a gay identity in America in the face of exclusion and discrimination. Why have differences in sexual orientation and gender identity been so difficult for many Americans to accept?

Week 11 (December 2nd): “The only good thing this hurricane brought us is that now everybody knows that we are American citizens...”

Americans on the periphery. In this final week, we will discuss groups of Americans who feel neglected by, or apart from, the rest of American society. We will consider native Hawaiians and the Hawaiian independence movement; Puerto Ricans in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria; and Korean Americans during the L.A. Riots.

*Research essay due.

Additional Statements

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

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 for such checking 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>).

Accessibility Options:

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 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

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://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf

to read about the University’s policy on medical accommodation. 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.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation.

Please note: Please visit https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/index.html to view all updated academic policies regarding medical accommodations.

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>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

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.

Scholastic Offences

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:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Copyright

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute lecture notes, wiki material, and other course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without my written consent.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ 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 e-mail vangalen@uwo.ca.