

AMERICAN STUDIES (AMS)

AMS 102 | INTRODUCTION TO U.S. POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

Popular music is a commercial, mass-mediated art form that has enormous social impact, shaping our identities, tastes, and cultural understanding in ways that are both deeply personal and more broadly political. This course introduces students to the study of popular music in a number of ways: as a form of mass-produced music with a specific industrial and social history; as a media product differentiated industrially through different genres, producers, stars, and targeted audiences; as a cultural product that both reflects and produces meaning within specific historical and social contexts; and as a source of affective investment, identity formation, community and socio-political meaning for audiences. In our examination of popular music, we will focus largely on popular music's development as a mass media form within the United States, although popular music's international influence will be acknowledged as well. Within that context, we will examine the way popular music both maintains and disrupts cultural hierarchies of class and taste, as well as often simultaneously erasing and exposing social differences and inequalities (such as those of race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, language, age, region, ability, etc.). A great deal of the course will involve actively listening to and analyzing popular music in its various forms and contexts; students will examine how popular music has impacted their own lives as well as those of others. Through our analysis of the complexities of popular music, we hope to better understand the significance of the role popular music has played and continues to play in shaping the cultures in which we live.

AMS 150 | PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICAN IDENTITIES | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

This course explores a variety of perspectives on what it means to be an American in the modern world, looking through polarities such as: inclusion and exclusion, urban and suburban life, localism and globalism, high culture and mass culture, wealth and poverty, freedom and incarceration.

AMS 200 | AMERICAN SOCIAL HISTORY AND CULTURE | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

This course will provide an overview of the central themes of American History from the colonial period to the present with a focus on social, popular, and cultural history.

AMS 201 | CRITICAL AMERICAN STUDIES | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

Using a range of interdisciplinary theories and methods, this course introduces students to critical American Studies as a field of scholarship that challenges the idea of the United States as socially and politically exceptional. Required course for AMS majors and minors, but open to all students.

AMS 202 | UNITED STATES POPULAR MUSIC HISTORY | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

This course introduces students to the historical significance of popular music in the United States from the 1890s to the present.

AMS 205 | INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR CULTURE | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

This course introduces students to the field of Popular Culture Studies. Students will learn how to define "popular culture" as both an industrial term used to describe commercial entertainment industries and a field of scholarly investigation focused on the development, cultural significance, and social impact of these industries. The course will offer methodological material that is tied to specific case studies of key industries from the late nineteenth century through the present, which will include leisure activities such as retail development (the department store and shopping mall), World's Fairs and amusement/theme parks, minstrelsy, vaudeville and burlesque performance, concerts, theatre, and mass media products such as mass advertising, pulp and popular fiction, tabloid newspapers and magazines, fashion, sheet music and recording, radio, films, television, internet culture and social media. Our analyses will emphasize the cultural aspects of these industries, especially the ways in which "popular culture" products have often been devalued and policed by cultural authorities because of their pleasure/sentimental ("feminine")-orientation, appeal to a "mass" rather than "class" audience, and producers and performers from the "bottom up" and social margins (the lower classes, non-Christians, immigrants, women, queer people, BIPOC people). Finally, we will examine the role of audience reception and fandom, focusing on the way in which cultural products have offered consumers exposure to a larger variety of social identities (racial, ethnic, classed, sexual, gendered, religious, etc.), which have resulted in equally diverse and often unexpectedly intense audience responses. Ultimately, this introduction to the complexities of Popular Culture will help students better understand the role it has played and continues to play in shaping human identities and desires both past and present.

AMS 230 | ASIAN AMERICAN HISTORIES | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

This course introduces the pre-1965 comparative histories of people of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Filipino, and Southeast Asian ancestry from their arrival in significant numbers in the United States beginning in the 19th century. Two questions orient this course: 1) whether there is an historical validity to the category of Asian American, and if so, the extent to which the category is relevant today in light of differences across gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and religion, among others; and 2) how the Asian Pacific American experience challenges and redefines American race relations to provide a more complex understanding of existing structures of power. Cross-listed with AAS 200.

AMS 240 | CHICAGO HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND CULTURES | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

A history of the founding and development of Chicago from a frontier village to a major industrial, commercial and cultural center. The course will provide an interdisciplinary study of Chicago, with special attention to Chicago's urban geography, built environment (i.e., housing/architecture), neighborhood shifts, and diverse cultures. Cross-listed with HST 240 and GEO 231.

AMS 248 | WHITE RACISM | 4 quarter hours (Undergraduate)

This seminar is an introduction to white studies and white racism. White racism is a set of socially organized attitudes, behaviors and beliefs about differences between Blacks and other groups of color in the United States. The focus is on how the color White is constituted as dominant in social life throughout the United States and Western Europe.

AMS 250 | IN THEIR OWN VOICES: AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

This course presents a range of American autobiographies, from different places and from times ranging from Colonial to modern. The selected authors represent varying backgrounds and races.

AMS 261 | AMERICAN ETHNICITIES 1800-1945 | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

This course will be an exploration of the development of American ethnic communities and identities in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Students will examine the American experience through the lens of ethnic groups and racialized ethnic populations and consider how ethnicity has shaped and influenced American history. We will study the experiences of American ethnic groups based on historical, social, and political factors such as immigration and citizenship, slavery and racialization, gender and patriarchy, religion and family, and the relationships between and among ethnic groups.

AMS 266 | MENTAL ILLNESS IN U.S. HISTORY AND CULTURE | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

This course examines dominant and shifting conceptions of mental illness in the United States during the 20th and 21st centuries. We will historically contextualize the course by examining major historical changes in medical thinking about mental illness, including degenerative (eugenic), psychoanalytic, and pharmaceutical (biomedical) approaches. We will also explore the evolving medical, social and institutional management of suffering people over time, including the employment of various physical and pharmacological therapies and the roles of asylums, hospitals, prisons, community centers and public "homeless" spaces as holding areas. Drawing from a wide range of scholarly sources, including history, anthropology, sociology, medicine, and interdisciplinary cultural studies areas such as Disability Studies, Madness Studies, Gender/ Sexuality Studies and Feminist Studies, and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, we will explore how normative standards of social behavior have been used to understand and define "illness" and "health," and the various ways impacted persons have responded to and at times resisted those definitions. This class will also take an intersectional approach, underlining how integrated systems of racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, ableism and colonialism have resulted in specific kinds of trauma that have made some social groups more vulnerable to medical coercion and abuse. Finally, we will analyze the historical and present strategies that mental health and disability justice advocates have employed to enact civil rights legislation, critique the medical/ pharmacological establishment, and promote alternative forms of therapy and care. Our examination will incorporate a variety of primary source materials, including popular histories and documentary films, mass media and creative works, medical archives, social media activity, legal documents, and oral histories.

AMS 275 | HISTORY OF SEX IN AMERICA 1: COLONIAL TO LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

This course will provide an overview of the history of American sexuality from the colonial period to the late 19th century.

AMS 276 | HISTORY OF SEX IN AMERICA 2: LATE VICTORIANS TO THE PRESENT | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

This course will provide an overview of the history of American sexuality from the late nineteenth century to the present. Cross-listed with HST 276.

AMS 277 | LGBTQ+ HISTORY IN THE UNITED STATES, WORLD WAR II TO THE PRESENT | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

This course is a historical survey of LGBTQ+ -identified people's lives in the United States from World War II (1941) to the Present. We will focus in particular on the way in which LGBTQ+ identities have developed within cultural, social, and political contexts, such as World War II, the civil rights movements of the 1950s-1970s (including the Stonewall Uprising), consumer culture and mass media, the AIDS crisis, the rise of the Religious Right, the advent of gay academic scholarship and queer/transgender identities, the political diversification of the LGBTQ+ community, gay/lesbian marriage, and the growth of LGBTQ+ internet/ social media communities and practices. We will examine both the larger national narrative of LGBTQ+ history and focus on the experience of particular groups, such as gay/lesbian activists in 1970s Chicago and transgender/gay ballroom performers. The term "LGBTQ+" in the title of the course acknowledges how the words "gay" and "lesbian" themselves are historically specific, and that LGBTQ+ lives are multiple, complex, and ever-shifting. Although our emphasis here is on sexual and gendered aspects of identity, we will always view subjects as intersectional and multiply-identified according to, for example, class, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, citizenship, indigenous status, and ability. In tracing the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights and expression and the social impact of LGBTQ+ people on American political institutions, culture and citizenry, we will draw on key historical documents, oral testimonies, academic criticism and theory, journalism, advertising, and popular culture.

AMS 280 | POLITICS AND HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

This course examines both the history of American involvement in Vietnam and the lasting effect on American politics and culture.

AMS 282 | INDIGENOUS AMERICAN HISTORY, 18TH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Through primary source readings, lectures, and scholarly essays, we will grapple with how American Indigenous people have been affected by U.S. settler colonialism, and how they have both adapted to and resisted social, political, economic, or cultural changes, broadly tracing changes over time from the 18th century to the present. Themes covered will include but not be limited to battles over sovereignty, civil rights, and self-determination.

AMS 285 | HISTORY AND U.S. POPULAR MEDIA | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

This course examines United States history and popular media. Depending on the instructor, it may focus on how United States history has been depicted in popular media or it may emphasize the history and development of popular media. Contact instructor for syllabus.

AMS 293 | TOPICS IN AMERICAN MATERIAL CULTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

AMS 294 | TOPICS IN AMERICAN POLITICS, INSTITUTIONS, AND VALUES | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

AMS 295 | SPECIAL TOPICS IN AMERICAN STUDIES | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Special Topics in American Studies. Consult schedule for topic.

**AMS 296 | TOPICS IN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE AND MEDIA | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

**AMS 297 | TOPICS IN AMERICAN RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

**AMS 298 | TOPICS IN AMERICAN SOCIAL AND LITERARY MOVEMENTS | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

**AMS 301 | SENIOR SEMINAR | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

The Senior Seminar is an integrative course conducted primarily as a colloquium. Emphasis will be placed on discussion and independent research and writing.

AMS 201 or instructor permission is a prerequisite for this class.

**AMS 328 | MOBILITY & THE STATE | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

In this course we explore the history, culture, and politics of migration along with an examination of the expanding borders of the United States. We analyze the varied mythology of the border as a danger zone, an intermediary zone, and a place of contact and conflict. We also look to the theorizations of the border as a site of cultural exchanges, resistance and critical negotiation; interchanges that impact the construction of race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender from both sides of the border. We examine issues relating to U.S. policies of immigration and labor movements as well as the economic and political consequences of globalization along the border region. Finally, we examine how the U.S. border has shifted and changed over time, critically challenging issues of political, cultural, and legal belonging.

**AMS 329 | POWER, OPPRESSION, RESISTANCE: APPROACHES TO CRITICAL RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

This seminar will serve as an introduction to key issues and methods in the comparative study of ethnicity and race. The course highlights an interdisciplinary approach to the studies of systematic oppression in the United States, and the global implication of these structures. We will consider how Ethnic Studies presents a progressive intellectual challenge to global and local configurations of power in the name of global justice. Among our methods will be an intersectional theoretical analysis of the identities of race, gender, class, nation, sexuality, ability and religion. Readings will cover Kimberle Crenshaw's and others theories of intersectionality, black feminist standpoint epistemology, postcolonial theory, mestiza feminism and other critical mixed race theories, queer critical theory, settler racism and state violence, as well as creative and political movements of resistance and social change.

AMS 201 is a prerequisite for this class.

**AMS 340 | AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE: 1840S-1940S | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

This course offers an international perspective on crime, law, and justice in the context of an increasing interconnected and global world. Students will explore comparative and transnational crime topics, and national, regional, and global approaches to crime control. Special topics that may be discussed include terrorism, organized crime, drug, gun, human trafficking, cyber-crime, and migration, global perspectives of justice, and criminal legal approaches to addressing crime and public safety. This course focuses on the historical development, cultural significance and social impact of American Popular Culture institutions, performers, and products in the United States from 1840s-1940s, including the rise of commercial leisure activities such as vaudeville, circuses, department stores and amusement parks and of mass media industries such as sheet music, advertising, records, radio and film. In our examination of American cultural history from this period, we will draw from a range of primary and secondary sources.

**AMS 352 | SEX, GENDER AND SOCIAL MEDIA | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

This course focuses on the gendered and sex/sexuality content of major social media platforms and networking sites, such as Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Pinterest, Reddit, and tumblr. We will ground our understanding of social media platforms in the context of established scholarship on social community development, cultural and media studies, and feminist and queer (LGBTQA) studies. Although our emphasis is on sexual and gendered aspects of identity, we will always view subjects as multiply-identified according to, most prominently, class, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and ability. We will examine how these platforms offer new opportunities for sexual education, sexual and erotic/romantic expression, the negotiation and exploration of sexual and gender identities, and feminist/queer media criticism, social activism, and community. We will also explore the more troubling aspects of social media, particularly its connection with global capitalism and neoliberal ideology, as well as how these platforms have provided new forums for public attacks on women and queer people.

**AMS 360 | AMERICAN FILM | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

Analyzes cultural and cinematic histories and film as a social practice circulating cultural values as well as critiquing ideologies. Students will gain understanding of major critical and theoretical approaches and engage in research, critical thinking, and writing on topic areas. Variable specific topics. e. g. assimilation narratives, war in film, sports in film, Asian American film.

**AMS 370 | THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF MODERN AMERICA | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

AMS 370 combines historical archaeology and material culture studies to examine how material goods both shape and reflect American identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**AMS 380 | TELEVISION AND AMERICAN IDENTITY | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)**

This course is about how television represents Americans and how Americans have responded to these representations. The course engages in close textual analysis of several television texts, to familiarize students with television industry narrative structures and strategies, examines several specific representational struggles, and surveys and discusses the many ways in which television viewers and fans engage with the text.

AMS 386 | ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE AND MEDIA | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

AMS 387 | ADVANCED TOPICS IN GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES IN THE U.S./AMERICAS | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

The focus in this course will be to use the interdisciplinary lens of gender and sexuality to gain a deeper understanding of diverse cultural landscapes within the United States and/or the Americas. The course will draw from current academic perspectives including social and cultural history, the history of medicine and psychology, legal and political history, literature, mass media and/or gender studies. Variable emphasis on particular historical periods or topics will depend on the instructor. Please consult class schedule for most current offerings. This course is repeatable when different topics are taken.

AMS 388 | ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN SOCIAL AND LITERARY MOVEMENTS | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

AMS 392 | INTERNSHIP | 1-4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Internship. Majors and minors only. Variable credit.

An American Studies major or minor is a prerequisite for this class.

AMS 393 | ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN MATERIAL CULTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

AMS 394 | ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN POLITICS, INSTITUTIONS, AND VALUES | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

AMS 395 | ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN STUDIES | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Topics in American Studies.

AMS 397 | ADVANCED TOPICS IN AMERICAN RACE AND ETHNIC STUDIES | 4 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Variable topics. Consult course schedule for current listings.

AMS 399 | INDEPENDENT STUDY | 1-4.5 quarter hours
(Undergraduate)

Independent Study. Majors only. Variable credit.

An American Studies Major is a prerequisite for this class.