

## 2009-2010 American Studies Program course listing

### FALL 2009

#### AMST 301-1

##### **SEMINAR FOR MAJORS: Immigration and Xenophobia in American Culture**

JOHN ALBA CUTLER                      W 2-5/UH 018                      FALL QUARTER 2009

**Course Description:** This seminar will explore shifting definitions of America and Americanness through the lens of the immigration "crisis," a recurring event in American cultural history. We will see the constitution and reconstitution of whiteness through the xenophobia motivating the creation of the Know-Nothings and the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and examine the discourses of assimilation informing the immigration legislations of 1924, 1965, and 1986. Texts will include films such as Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* (2002) and Cary Fukunaga's *Sin Nombre* (2009); letters and essays by Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt; articles by assimilation sociologists such as Robert Parks, Milton M. Gordon, and Richard Alba and Victor Nee; and contemporary non-fiction essays by Ruben Martinez.

#### AMST 310-20

##### **STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: The American Century in Asia**

Cross-list with Asian Am 392-0-20, Seminar in Asian American Studies

JINAH KIM                              T 2-5/Ann G-30                              FALL QUARTER 2009

**Course Description:** "The American Century" is a term popularized by *Life* editor Henry Luce and describes what he imagined as the utopic potential of an American global leadership made necessary by the decline of European empires in Asia, Africa, and Latin America after World War II. Indeed, the period following World War II is characterized by unprecedented economic growth and wealth in the United States that is accompanied by the intensification of U.S. military, political, and economic internationalisms throughout the globe. In this interdisciplinary class we will study the history and representations of U.S. wars, economic and political development plans, and international humanist projects in Asia to map the tight connections wrought between these two spaces in constituting the American Century.

We will develop "intimacy" as an analytic to understand how wartime relations and post-war development projects rearrange domestic and gender practices as well as national culture, politics and economy. We will study domesticity, sex-work, war brides, transnational adoption practices; we will also attempt to understand the role of Christian missions, education, and medicine in the creation of discrepant cultural practices, contingent alliances, and transnational ties. In addition to studying how power flows from the U.S. to Asia, we will also understand how U.S. notions of self, family, nation and culture have been and continue to be irrevocably affected and changed by its intimate relations with Asia since the end of WWII.

**Teaching Method:** Discussion.

**Evaluation Method:** one 20-minute presentation, 10%; class participation, 15%; one short 2-3 page paper, 15%; weekly journal entry, 20% and a final research project or research paper, 40%.

**Reading:**

Primary Texts will be available at Norris Bookstore

- Bulosan, *America is in the Heart* (Harcourt Brace, 2000) ISBN: 0-295-95289-X
- Buck, *The Good Earth* (Pocket, 2005) ISBN: 1-4165-0018-9
- Burdick and Lederer, *The Ugly American* (Norton, 1999) ISBN: 0-393-31867-2
- Phan, *We Should Never Meet* (Picador, 2005)
- Hirahara, *Summer of the Big Bachi* (Dell, 2004) ISBN-13: 9780385337595
- Lee, *A Gesture Life* (Riverhead, 2000)

Films and Documentaries will stream on Blackboard

- dir. Rogan, *South Pacific*
- dirs. Lee and Lee, *Camp Arirang*.
- dir. Campbell, *Memoirs of a Geisha*
- dir. Kim-Gibson, *Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women*
- dir. Tajiri, *History and Memory*
- dir. Renais, *Hiroshima Mon Amour*

Secondary readings are in a reader at **Quartet Copies**, 825 Clark St/328-0720.

**AMST 310-21**

**STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: Trauma and the Vietnam War**

Cross-list with History 392/395-37 (concentration: Americas), Topics in History/Research Seminar

KATHLEEN BELEW      TTh 3:30-4:50/Parkes 224      FALL QUARTER 2009

**Course Description:** How did boot camp shape the home front? What happened when U.S. soldiers returned home from Vietnam? When veterans became violent, how did society cope—from the family unit to the medical profession? This course provides an opportunity for a close reading of the Vietnam War and its lasting impact on American society and culture. We will engage histories, films, novels, primary sources, and psychological texts in understanding the Vietnam War as a turning point in American history. We will focus on indoctrination, vivid accounts of combat, and the emergence of post-traumatic stress disorder. The course will also cover aftermath, particularly the impact of veterans on home and political life in the United States.

**AMST 310-22**

**STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: The History of Higher Education in America**

WILLIAM HAARLOW      M 2-5/UH 018      FALL QUARTER 2009

The only western institution older than the university is the Church. Yet the history of education, especially higher education, had always been a minor field within history. Education is universally

regarded as essential to individual and social improvement, yet relatively few people are familiar with its history and its philosophical underpinnings. For example, Weinberg students graduate with a bachelors of arts, but what does that mean? What constitutes a liberal arts education? What exactly are the liberal arts? Hint: traditionally, there are seven of them.

**Course Description:** This course will study both the growth of colleges and universities and the major social factors and philosophical rationales that have shaped their development. Although relevant material from the classical and medieval periods will be discussed, emphasis will be placed upon the historical development of higher education in British colonial America and the United States. It is anticipated that the design and conduct of this course will provide participants with an understanding of the traditional and emerging patterns and roles of universities and other major institutions of higher education. Special stress will be placed upon the changing concept of “university” from its medieval beginnings through its contemporary variations. Through research, presentations, readings, discussions and seminar lectures, students will investigate the evolving aims, structure, functions, curriculum, administration, financing and faculty roles inherent in the university concept.

In developing this informational and conceptual perspective, students should have more specifically:

- a. Increase their understanding of the relationship between institutions of higher education and social, economic, political and religious currents.
- b. Strengthen their ability to evaluate and interpret historical sources.
- c. Broaden their academic knowledge base via reading, research, presentation, and discussion.
- d. Gain perspective into the historical context of value positions and ideological commitments that both sustain and produce conflicts within the contemporary university.
- e. Develop a deepened awareness of the domestic and foreign ideals and practices that have and are influencing the course of higher education in the United States.

**Teaching Method:** Class seminars will be held on Mondays from 2:00 to 5:00 in University Hall 018.

**Evaluation Method:** Students will be graded on: short weekly responses to the readings; a research paper; an oral presentation on their research; a final essay; and class participation. Students will be required to read a combination of books, articles and primary sources.

**AMST 390-1**  
**SENIOR PROJECT**

IVY WILSON

T 2-5/UH 018

FALL QUARTER 2009

with: Peter Jaros

**Course Description:** A year-long sequence to complete a thesis or field study required of majors.

## WINTER 2010

### AMST 301-2

#### SEMINAR FOR MAJORS: High School in the United States: Pedagogies of National Citizenship

JAN RADWAY

W 2-5/UH 018

WINTER QUARTER 2010

**Course Description:** As a way of reflecting on the interdisciplinary character and methods of American Studies, as well as on some of the field's most recent preoccupations and concerns, this course will explore the phenomenon of "high school" in the United States and its central role in the culture's imaginary. More than simply an institution for educating young Americans about a range of different topics, high school in the United States is also a highly complex social and cultural institution through which nearly all Americans circulate. As such, it plays a central role in preparing adolescents for national citizenship and promotes intense feelings of anxiety, nostalgia, and even shame among those required to submit themselves to its discipline. We will investigate the nature of the connection between this kind of affective response and the fact that, because high school in the U. S. is neither uniform nor unified and constituted at the same time by a range of practices at once official and highly informal, it also differentiates among the young people it addresses. Through an analysis of the history, culture, and social and political effects of high school, we will consider how this institution functions as a social sorting mechanism and how it produces, reproduces and maintains a highly differentiated society. Some of the topics we will discuss include the economic conditions of possibility for high school; the nature of the official and unofficial curriculum; the role of extra-curricular activities including clubs, athletics, and social activities; and the role of friendship, cliques, and social networks in the organization of activities surrounding gender presentation and intimate social relations.

### AMST 310-0-20

#### STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: Bad News

LARRY STUELPNAGEL

M 2-5/UH 018

WINTER QUARTER 2010

Scott Hall 313

847-491-4853; 312-503-8529

lls768@northwestern.edu

Lecture: Kresge 4310

**Course Description:** Bad News. That is what Americans are experiencing as a result of the corporate media mergers that took place in the closing years of the last century. Today there are six major companies that control much of what people read, hear and see. Those firms are AOL-Time Warner, General Electric, Walt Disney, News Corporation, Viacom/CBS, and Bertelsman.

As the firms passed from largely family owned to publicly traded companies, the pressure for profit from Wall Street has led to cutbacks in the size of the firm's news divisions and a change in news story values that have "softened" the types of news that people see on television.

This course will begin with an examination of the monetary forces that are driving the industry away from its primary mission of information. Critics, of whom the professor is one, contend that the drive for increasing profits is coming at the expense of both the quality and quantity of news that appear on television and radio, newspapers and magazines, and the Internet. The ever-diminishing number of news providers is also threatening democracy by limiting the number of voices that can be heard in our society.

We will examine the impact of these mergers on several areas of news coverage and public discussion:

1. Privacy and scandal, particularly the stories about President Bill Clinton.

2. The transformation of how the press has covered wars from Vietnam to the new Gulf War. Has the media gone from watchdog to lapdog?

3. Race. Former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley has said, "America is a nation obsessed with the interplay between African Americans and White Americans." We will examine how the press has covered the issue of race in America and how the press deals with the issue in its own newsrooms.

4. Politics. Reporting of scandals and personality has replaced critical evaluations of policy. The "horse race" with its poll-driven coverage is now the norm. We will examine the phenomenon through the lens of the 2000 and 2004 presidential races.

**Evaluation Method (s):** Your grade will be determined in the following way; 25% for an OP-Ed piece on a subject of your choice that is germane to the class and approved by the professor; 35% for a 10-15 page term paper; 25% take home examination; 15% class participation. **No P/N.** I do not grant extensions for any written assignments. They are due at the beginning of the class as noted on the syllabus. Failure to make the deadline will result in a lower grade for that assignment.

## AMST 310-21

### STUDIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE: Reading and Writing Biography

ELIZABETH PARDOE

TH 2-5/UH 018

WINTER QUARTER 2010

**Course Description:** Biographies allow us to present ourselves and understand others through the use of narrative. Done well, biographies both bring an individual to life on the page and create an argumentative framework in which to understand the individual. Multiple professions rely upon the ability to construct and critique biographies. Journalists and historians write biographies. Playwrights and filmmakers attempt to transpose biography onto stage and screen. The best biography draws upon interdisciplinary methodologies of research, interpretation, and writing. All biographies demand critical analysis of their subject and the interpretive lens through which the biographer presents him or her. For example, a nineteenth-century confederate and a twentieth-century civil rights leader might author very different biographies of Thomas Jefferson.

This course intends to develop your skills at drawing together life stories in an argumentative framework and at critiquing those created by others. Good biography draws on original sources found in archival collections. As Northwestern students you have easy access to three such collections: The Northwestern University Archives, The Chicago Historical Society, and The Newberry Library. With these resources, you will have the opportunity to deconstruct and reconstruct our understanding of 'The American Experience' and by drafting a biography and by probing the meaning of your own American experience as you write an autobiography.

**Reading:** includes but not limited to the following:

*Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* by Barack Obama in paperback.

ISBN-13: 9781400082773

*Barack Obama: A Pocket Biography of Our 44th President* by Steven J. Niven

ISBN: 0195390784

*Obama: From Promise to Power* by David Mendell  
ISBN: 0060858206

**AMST 390-2**  
**SENIOR PROJECT**

IVY WILSON  
with: Peter Jaros

T 2-5/UH 018

WINTER QUARTER 2010

**Course Description:** A year-long sequence to complete a thesis or field study required of majors.

**SPRING 2010**

**AMST 301-3**

**SEMINAR FOR MAJORS:**

JAY GROSSMAN

T 2-5/UH 018

SPRING QUARTER 2010

**Course Description:**

**Teaching Method:**

**Evaluation Method:**

**Reading:**

**AMST 390-3**

**SENIOR PROJECT**

IVY WILSON

T 2-5/Parkes 215

SPRING QUARTER 2010

with: Peter Jaros

**Course Description:** A year-long sequence to complete a thesis or field study required of majors.