

Spring 2014

American Studies 103

Introduction to American Cultures

Monday & Wednesday 1:15-2:30
Humanities 202 (Scripps)

Professor Bill Anthes
bill_anthes@pitzer.edu
Office Hours: Tues 10:30-12, Wed 3-4:30
or by appointment
Office: Avery 222
Office Phone: 73176

Professor Matt Delmont
mdelmont@scrippscollege.edu
Office Hours: Wed 2:45-4:15
or by appointment
Office: Balch 214
Office Phone: 70077

Course description:

This course will introduce you to important themes and methods in American Studies. We will examine the concept of Americanness, focusing on identity, community, belonging and place. We will analyze race and racism; migration and immigration; and culture (e.g., art, music, film) across a wide range of academic and popular texts, including social, cultural, and art historical; music; films; short stories; and ethnography. This class serves as the introductory course in the five-colleges American Studies program, but is open to all students.

Course aims:

The purpose of this course is to provide you with the analytical tools to become an active participant in the debates surrounding U.S. history and culture within and outside of the academy. Through reading, viewing, and writing assignments you will be exposed to a wide range of approaches to, and thinking about “America.” You will be asked to develop and defend your own opinions on these subjects through class discussions, writing assignments, and group project presentations. This course will give you a solid foundation of critical thinking, reading, writing, and discussion skills that you can apply to other American Studies classes and courses across the college curriculum.

Course requirements

- **In-class writing responses to assigned reading/viewing:** **30%**
The readings and film screenings are an extremely important part of this course and are weighted accordingly. You are expected to complete the reading/viewing assignments outlined below and to attend every class prepared to be a thoughtful contributor and active listener in class discussions. Each day for which there is a reading/viewing assignment, we will start class with a short writing assignment. You will be asked to write for five minutes on a question related to that day’s reading. The questions will ask you to explore one of the main themes, terms, and/or examples in that day’s reading/film. These will not be trick questions and should be accessible if you have done the reading. These writings will be given one of the following three grades: 1 (thoughtful answer to question that indicates you have done the reading); .5 (some indication in your writing that you have done the reading);

0 (no indication you have done the reading). Your writings will be handed back at the start of the next class. These writing assignments are intended to facilitate an informed discussion of the readings in class. They will also function as our attendance roster. If you are sick or miss a class, you will need to e-mail Prof. Anthes or Prof. Delmont a 300-word summary of that day's reading before the next class to receive credit.

- **Midterm essay** **30%**
4-5 pages. Essay prompts will be distributed before spring break and essays will be due Sunday, March 30th.

- **Group Research Project and Presentation** **40%**
Small teams of students will do research on materials, selected by Prof. Anthes and Prof. Delmont, from Honnold Special Collections, the Pomona College Art Museum, and the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps. Student will visit the archival collections, consult secondary sources related to the materials, and present their research to the class. This will provide a “hands-on” experience that will ask you to utilize and synthesize some the methods and the content that we have been studying throughout the course.

Required books

- Course reader (available for purchase in Balch 216)
 - Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (2013)
 - Rebecca Solnit, *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* (2010)
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Week 1:

Wednesday, 1/22

Course introduction

Week 2:

Mon 1/27

 Class visit to “Andrea Bowers: #sweetjane” exhibition. Meet at Nichols Gallery, Broad Center, Pitzer College

Wed 1/29

 Discussion of “Andrea Bowers: #sweetjane” exhibition in class

Week 3:

Mon 2/3

-  Brian Haley & Larry Wilcoxon, “How Spaniards Became Chumash and other Tales of Ethnogenesis,” *American Anthropologist* (September 2005), pp. 432-445 (in course reader)
-  James Clifford, “Identity in Mashpee” in *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) pp. 277-346 (in course reader)

Wed 2/5

- 📖 George Lipsitz, “Mardi Gras Indians,” in *Time Passages* (1990) pp. 233-53 (in course reader)

Week 4:**Mon 2/10**

- 📖 Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (2013), pp. 1-90

Wed 2/12

- 📖 Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (2013), pp. 91-152

Week 5:**Mon 2/17**

- 🎬 *The Exiles* (Dir. Kent MacKenzie, 1961) film screening in class

Wed 2/19

- 🎬 *The Exiles* discussion of film

Week 6:**Mon 2/24**

- 🎬 *Killer of Sheep* (Dir. Charles Burnett, 1979) film screening in class

Wed 2/26

- 🎬 *Killer of Sheep* discussion of film

Week 7:**Mon 3/3**

- 📖 Evelyn Alsultany, “Selling American Diversity and Muslim American Identity through Nonprofit Advertising Post-9/11,” *American Quarterly* (September 2007), pp. 593-622 (in course reader)
- 📖 Evelyn Alsultany, “Arabs and Muslims in the Media after 9/11: Representations Strategies for a ‘Post-Race Era,’” *American Quarterly* (March 2013), pp. 161-169 (in course reader)

Wed 3/5

- 📖 Sunaina Maira, “Flexible Citizenship/Flexible Empire: South Asian Muslim Youth in Post-9/11 America” *American Quarterly* (September 2008), pp. 697-720 (in course reader)

Week 8:

Mon 3/10

- 📖 Hisaye Yamamoto, “Wilshire Bus” and “A Fire in Fontana” (short stories) in *Seventeen Syllables*, pp. 34-38; 150-157 (in course reader)

Wed 3/12

- 🗣️ Prof. Maria Buszek (CU-Denver) guest lecture
- 📖 Lester Bangs, “The White Noise Supremacists,” pp.272-282 (in course reader)
- 📖 Ellen Willis, selections from *Out of the Vinyl Deeps*, pp. 148-163 (in course reader)
- 📖 Dan Graham, “New Wave Rock and the Feminine,” pp. 116-137 (in course reader)

Week 9:

3/17 and 3/19

Spring break

Week 10:

Mon 3/24

- 📖 Erika Doss, “Contesting American Identity in Contemporary Memorial Culture,” in *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (2010), pp. 313-376 (in course reader)

Wed 3/26

- 📖 Amanda Cobb, “The National Museum of the American Indian as Cultural Sovereignty” (AQ, Vol. 57, no. 2, June 2005), pp. 485-506 (in course reader)

Friday 3/28

- 🏛️ Class visit to Autry museum, 9am-Noon. Bus details TBD.

*****MIDTERM ESSAY DUE, SUNDAY MARCH 30th*****

Week 11:

Mon 3/31

- 🏛️ Class visit to 5C archival collections to start group projects

Wed 4/2

- 🏛️ Class visit to 5C archival collections to start group projects

Week 12:

Mon 4/7

- 📖 Rebecca Solnit, *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* (2010)

Wed 4/9

- 📖 Rebecca Solnit, *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* (2010)

Week 13:

Mon 4/14

● Prof. Todd Honma (Pitzer) guest lecture on Tattooing

Wed 4/16

Class time to work on group projects

Week 14:

Mon 4/21

Group presentations in class

Wed 4/23

Group presentations in class

Week 15:

Mon 4/28

Group presentations in class

Wed 4/30

Group Presentations in class

Week 16:

Mon 5/5

Class wrap-up and evaluations