American Studies Courses (AMST)

AMST Courses

This is a list of courses with the subject code AMST. For more information, see American Studies (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) in the Catalog.

AMST:1000 First-Year Seminar

Small discussion class taught by a faculty member; topics chosen by instructor; may include outside activities (e.g., films, lectures, performances, readings, field trips). Requirements: undergraduate first-year standing.

AMST:1010 Understanding American Cultures

The United States in historical, contemporary, and transnational perspective; social and cultural diversity and conflict in American life; debates on concepts of America, the American Dream, national culture, citizenship. GE: Values and Culture.

AMST:1030 Introduction to African American Culture

Examination of Black cultural experiences in the United States and the African diaspora; focus on literature, music, film, comics, anime, popular culture, and visual/performing arts. GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as AFAM:1020.

AMST:1049 Introduction to Native American and Indigenous Studies


AMST:1060 Sex and Popular Culture in America

Critical and historical introduction to representation of human sexuality in American popular culture from World War II to the present. GE: Values and Culture. Same as ENGL:1410, GWSS:1060.

AMST:1074 Inequality in American Sport

Cultural meanings of sport in contemporary U.S. culture; sport experiences, inclusion, and exclusion as affected by social class, gender and sexuality, age and ethnicity, and religion. GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as GWSS:1074, SPST:1074.

AMST:1075 American Popular Music: Rock and Roll to 1980

From the beginning, rock and roll subcultures have deliberately challenged and changed the values, attitudes, and behaviors of the mainstream (as well as the music itself); during the past 40 years, movements such as punk, hip hop, and electronica have confronted conventional notions of race, gender, sexual identity, social justice, and economic disparities in ways that reveal much about the underlying tensions of American life; using music as a lens, students examine these aspects of the nation's social history from 1980 to the present; materials are drawn from music, films, music videos, popular magazines, newspapers, and books.

AMST:1080 American Political Humor

How political humor reflects and influences American attitudes regarding government institutions, elected officials, the democratic process; how humor works; examples from Revolutionary War present and from varied media, including cartoons, fiction, film, television, internet.

AMST:1154 Food in America

Cultural significance of production, distribution, and consumption of food in the United States. GE: Values and Culture.

AMST:1290 Native American Foods and Foodways

Native Americans as original farmers of 46 percent of the world's table vegetables; examination of food as a cultural artifact (e.g., chocolate, tobacco); food as a primary way in which human beings express their identities; environmental, material, and linguistic differences that shape unique food cultures among Native peoples across the Western Hemisphere; close analysis of Indigenous foods, rituals, and gender roles associated with them; how colonization transformed Native American, European, and African American cultures. GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as GHS:1290, HIST:1290, NAIS:1290.

AMST:1300 American Popular Culture Abroad

Exploration of global circulation of American popular culture; how American popular culture depicts the world outside of U.S. borders.

AMST:1600 War Stories

Exploration of the history of U.S. conflicts from Vietnam to the War on Terror through novels, film, and other cultural forms; specific focus on how U.S. social structures influence experiences of war. Same as LATS:1600, SJUS:1600.

AMST:1630 U.S. History Through Objects

Interpretation of U.S. history through stories embedded in material artifacts ranging from guns, farming tools, and religious relics to mechanical toys, office gadgets, and vehicles; invention, manufacture, and marketing of tools and objects; their use and adaptation by various groups of Americans (women, African Americans, immigrants); meanings and memories invested in them; preservation of objects in museums, attics, and time capsules.

AMST:1700 Fake News: A History of Misinformation in the United States

Fake news is sometimes imagined as a recent phenomenon, but misinformation campaigns have a long history in the United States; students survey some of the most significant instances of misinformation in U.S. history from the 18th century to present, explore the historical context that motivated the attempt at misinformation, consider how people sought to combat it, and reflect on outcomes and implications of these campaigns; tools to effectively identify and combat misinformation in contemporary life. Recommendations: basic knowledge of U.S. history.

AMST:1800 American Gothic: Film, Literature, and Popular Culture

Gothic eruptions of the uncanny in 19th- through 21st-century American literature, film, and mass culture; how ghosts, vampires, and visitants from the dark side call attention to fluid or liminal social space while communicating information and anxieties about repressed histories, economic change, and unstable intersections of gender, sexuality, race, religion, and class identities; special attention given to modernity and post-modernity of American gothic as an artifact of U.S. consumer culture and mass visual media. GE: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts.
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<td>AMST:1900</td>
<td>Time in America: Clocks, Calendars, and Capsules</td>
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<td>AMST:2000</td>
<td>Introduction to American Studies</td>
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<td>AMST:2025</td>
<td>Diversity in American Culture</td>
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<td>AMST:2100</td>
<td>This is America: The Cultural Politics of Popular Music</td>
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<td>AMST:2130</td>
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<td>AMST:2150</td>
<td>Money, Capitalism, and Culture</td>
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<td>AMST:2230</td>
<td>Fame and Celebrity in U.S. History</td>
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<td>AMST:2300</td>
<td>Native Americans in Film</td>
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<td>AMST:2700</td>
<td>The Black Image in Sequential Art: Comics, Graphic Novels, and Anime</td>
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<td>AMST:3050</td>
<td>Topics in American Cultural Studies</td>
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<td>AMST:3053</td>
<td>The Civil Rights Movement</td>
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<td>AMST:3078</td>
<td>Archiving Women's History</td>
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<td>AMST:3100</td>
<td>Critical Race Theory: Culture, Power, and Society</td>
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AMST:3171 Baseball in America 3 s.h. Forces that influenced political, economic, and social development of professional baseball in the United States; rise of major league baseball, its relationship to the minor leagues, and development of organized baseball industry. Same as SPST:3171.

AMST:3178 Making It: Modern Sport and U.S. Society 3 s.h. Growth and institutionalization of sport from colonial times to 1900. Same as SPST:3178.

AMST:3179 Twentieth-Century American Sport 3 s.h. Historic development of sport in the United States between 1900 and 2000; economic forces, professionalization, growth of media, and increasing opportunities and ongoing challenges for various sporting populations. Same as SPST:3179.

AMST:3195 American Cultures and American Photography 3 s.h. Introduction to visual, cultural, and historical frameworks to view and interpret photographs as material artifacts.

AMST:3198 New Media and the Future of Sport 3 s.h. Emergence and significance of internet blogs, social media, convergence journalism, video games, and fantasy sports; economic, regulatory, and cultural forces that shape new media sport journalism and entertainment. Same as JMC:3135, SPST:3198.

AMST:3205 American Cultural History 3 s.h. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century U.S. history from a cultural perspective; culture defined broadly to encompass paintings, sculpture, theater, novels, and newer forms of entertainment made available by lithography, photography, cinema, the phonograph, radio, and television; rather than assume Americans were passive consumers of commercial culture, students examine how Americans expressed themselves through foodways, home decor, clothing fashions, or slang; how Americans drew on these cultural forms in social/political struggles over race, gender, class, and sexuality. Same as HIST:3205.

AMST:3249 History of Iowa and the Midwest 3 s.h. People of Iowa and surrounding Midwestern states—a land where people work hard, are practical, and to earth, and honest; the idea of a place in the heartland as real or simply a myth; history of Midwestern states from Native American occupation to present; how reality, ideas, and images are portrayed. Same as HIST:3249.

AMST:3251 The Office: Business Life in America 3 s.h. History of business life in America from birth of Wall Street to rise of Silicon Valley; modes of managing and regulating office workers; changing designs of office buildings, furniture, gadgets; corporate response to rise of class inequalities and growing gender and racial diversity in workforce; portrayal of businessperson in novels, movies, television, art, photography. Same as HIST:3251.

AMST:3265 American Monuments 3 s.h. History of public monuments in America from the inception of first major monuments in the 1820s to the latest incarnations (e.g., counter-monuments such as the 9/11 Memorial, spontaneous and temporary monuments, online memorials); how monuments have depicted Indians, Blacks, Southern confederates, women, and other groups; how monuments have commemorated wars, Indian massacres, lynchings, and political movements (e.g., civil rights, women’s suffrage); how monuments have been reinterpreted through popular protests and depositing of artifacts; why monuments have attracted so much controversy, culminating in recent events at Charlottesville. Same as HIST:3265.

AMST:3410 Undocumented America: Citizenship, Race, and Immigration 3 s.h. Examination of how literature and culture responds to and rearticulates culture, history, legal logic, and economic parameters that frame who is "legal" and "illegal" and how undocumented immigrants document and contest their lack of rights; how designations of immigrant’s illegal or undocumented status depend on and maintain U.S. discourse about race and ethnicity. Same as LATS:3410.

AMST:3415 Latina/o/x Protest, Movement, Resistance 3 s.h. Examination of history, form, and function of protest, social movement, and resistance by Latina/o peoples in the United States. Same as LATS:3415, SJUS:3415.

AMST:3420 Latinas/os/x and the Law 3 s.h. Introduction and survey of Latina/o/x legal history; topics include segregation, educational rights, immigration, voting rights, citizenship, and the criminal justice system. Same as LATS:3420, POLI:3427, SJUS:3420.

AMST:3430 Women on Stage 3 s.h. Examination of how and why women in the United States have expressed themselves through theatre and performance from 1776 to present; students study plays as performed events in specific times and places for specific audiences through works by African American, Asian American, European American, Latina, Native American, and lesbian/queer writers; what theater—as a public, embodied art form—offers female writers; how stakes differ for women of diverse backgrounds in using this often suspect and uniquely powerful medium in particular historical moments; how changing definitions of gender and sexuality come into play; prior background in the theater not required. Same as GWSS:3430, THTR:3430.

AMST:3450 Queer Latina/o/x Studies 3 s.h. Relationship of Latina/o/x culture with gender, sexuality, and queerness. Same as LATS:3430, SJUS:3430.

AMST:3600 Digitizing Blackness 3 s.h. Examination of Black cultural experiences in digital spheres, including digital humanities and new information technologies; focus on Afrofuturism, gaming, augmented reality; digital mapping, podcasting, social media, and digital cultures; exposure to digital tools and methods. Same as AFAM:3600.

AMST:3900 Seminar in American Cultural Studies 3 s.h. Interdisciplinary perspectives on a single theme or period.

AMST:3994 Independent Study arr.

AMST:4800 Latina/o/x Popular Culture 3 s.h. Role of Latina/o/x popular culture as a site of contemporary social practice and cultural politics in both local and global contexts; specific attention to notions of citizenship, identity, and culture. Taught in English. Same as LATS:4800, SPAN:4820.
AMST:4999 Honors Project  arr.  Independent interdisciplinary research, writing.

AMST:5000 Interdisciplinary Research in American Cultures  3 s.h.  Research, theories, and methods in the interdisciplinary study of American cultures.

AMST:5002 Critical Theories and Cultural Studies  3 s.h.  Exploration and application of critical theories to contemporary sport; feminism, Marxism, critical race theory, whiteness studies, queer theory, postcolonial theory, postmodernism, and poststructuralism. Same as SPST:5002.

AMST:6050 Seminar: Topics in American Studies  3 s.h.  American cultural history; urbanization, mass media, pluralism, assimilation.

AMST:6074 Seminar in Sport History  3 s.h.  Topics in sport history; theoretical and methodological issues. Same as SPST:6074.

AMST:6140 Engaged Scholarship in the Humanities  0,3 s.h.  Survey of literature on community-engaged scholarship (CES) in the humanities; exploration of the pioneering work of engaged scholars in Native American, Latino, and African American studies; students write a research prospectus that is consistent with CES methodologies. Same as HIST:6140.

AMST:6300 Writing for Learned Journals  1-4 s.h.  Seminar that supports graduate students in bringing written work to publishable form; analysis of target journals' audiences, interests, and citation politics; submission and the publication process; response to reader reports and criticism; best writing and research practices; discussion of knowledge cultures and discourses in disciplines and the contemporary academy. Same as GRAD:6300, GWSS:6300, RHET:6330.

AMST:6500 Critical Readings in Cultural Studies: Stuart Hall’s Legacy and Influences  3 s.h.  Exploration of the scholarship of Stuart Hall along with theories, methods, and history of cultural studies; focus on major areas of Hall’s work including Marxist thought and the political economy, diasporas and globalization, cultural production and popular culture, film and cinema studies, race, ethnicity, identity, and difference; key theorists that influenced Stuart Hall (e.g., Marx, Foucault, Fanon, Gramsci, Althusser) and scholars in cultural studies that have made appropriate use of Hall’s writings and theories in their own work; role of theory in everyday life and the critical role of public intellectuals. Same as AFAM:6500, ENGL:6050.

AMST:7077 Sport Studies Workshop  1 s.h.  Development of individual research projects for group discussion. Requirements: graduate standing in American studies or sport studies. Same as SPST:7070.

AMST:7085 Dissertation Writing Workshop  1 s.h.  Dissertation preparatory work with peer and faculty critiques, including preparation of a prospectus, research activities, and chapter writing. Requirements: American studies graduate standing with postcomprehensive examination status.


AMST:7994 Independent Study  arr.